A PREVENTATIVE MINISTRY FOR PASTORAL BURNOUT
A STUDY OF ELIJAH IN 1 KINGS 19

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To Meloday, My Wife – Christ Follower, Ministry Partner, Godly Mother, and Encouraging Friend

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ABSTRACT

Research demonstrates that burnout is experienced by those who work in the fields of social service and care for people. The most recent research also demonstrates that burnout is a factor faced by those in the pastorate. There are specific causes of pastoral burnout and there are specific ways to prevent burnout and to be restored from burnout. The Scriptures demonstrate that the nature of ministry places the pastor at a high risk for pastoral burnout. The burnout of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 19 is the framework for a ministry of preventing pastoral burnout. The intentional ministry of Yahweh addresses the burnout of Elijah by providing the rest, renewal, reconnecting, realigning and reengaging that he needs and so that Yahweh can recommission Elijah, His prophet.

THE PROPOSAL FOR A PREVENTATIVE MINISTRY FOR PASTOR BURNOUT

The Problem and Setting

Each year pastors begin new ministries with the anticipation of fulfilling the great commission, shepherding their congregation and leading the people of God. As ministry unfolds and years pass, their anticipation turns to frustration, their shepherding becomes discouraging and their leading comes through conflict. Oftentimes amidst this turmoil, their marriage and family endures the stress filled years with broken communication and unfulfilled expectation. Over time, the pastor is depleted of energy, passion and the ability to lead. With his tank running on empty and with nothing to give, the pastor is unsure where to turn or where to get help.

Unattended, this condition leads the pastor down a road of disappointment, discouragement, anger, bitterness and depression. Exhausted and unable to provide the care, leading or shepherding of the congregation, he may be fired, dismissed or resign his pastorate. He is burned out and unable to pastor a church or care for his family. His options are to seek a recovery church, a counseling center, a new job, a new church and little help to restore his life, family and ministry.

As a pastor who began with the excitement of reaching his world for Christ, the pastor finds himself struggling to live and even questioning his role, ministry or any involvement in the local church. If there is any hope in the church, it is to hide on the back row and never be involved in vocational ministry again.

When we watch how things work, we agree that there is normal wear and tear on machines, cars, highways, homes and our lives. Whenever a new item is purchased it is comes with an "Owner's Manual." In this manual, you are instructed on how to operate the new item, how to troubleshoot problems, how to care for your new item and the necessary maintenance to keep it operating at its greatest proficiency. And if you do all that is in accordance with the "Owner's Manual", your warranty is secured and your new item will last a long time.

Instead of wearing out and burning out the lives, families and ministries of a pastor, can a ministry be created to help prevent burnout? This is a ministry that provides a "50,000 Mile Check Up" for the pastor and his spouse. This check up could realign the pastor with his spouse, his personal values and ministry vision. This check-up would be done through assessments, a four day coaching retreat and a game plan for the next 5-10 years of ministry.

Literature Review

Burnout is a term used in many popular magazines, articles or even pop psychology, but how is burnout defined or described? When burnout is discussed, are there symptoms that can be identified? And if the symptoms are identified, does the literature provide any steps of restoration for those who have burned out? Out of the discussion of symptoms and care for those that face burnout, is there any preventative way to avoid this happening in the lives of people?

Burnout may be a condition faced by many people in the workforce, but is it a real condition faced by pastors? Have studies been completed or literature written that provide

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special insight and understanding for burnout among the clergy? Even if the problem can be identified and after burnout, bring about restoration, is there any way in which a pastor can avoid burnout? Are there certain practices a pastor can do or special help a pastor can receive that can help him avoid burnout?

Biblical Framework

Though pastors may experience burnout in their ministry experience, do the Scriptures provide examples or experiences of the leaders of God's people suffering in this way? The Scriptures are replete with leaders in the nation of Israel and the church of Jesus Christ. These leaders have demonstrated the responsibility of leading, care and protecting God's people; however, have they been overwhelmed by this leadership? Have they been discouraged or depressed from what God has called them to do?

And if the leaders of the Bible have been discouraged and burned out, are there any ways in which these leaders were strengthened and restored to ministry? Do the Scriptures provide the ways or the means by which this process may take place?

If the Bible does identify a problem of burnout, the Bible should provide some help for these leaders. Does the Bible provide extended narrative passages giving us a description of burnout and how to recover from it? Are there specific verses that speak of the symptoms or experiences of burnout? Do we find principles of the Scriptures that may help us see the reality of burnout but specific ways to recover from burnout?

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Project Design

This project is to create a "50,000 Mile Check Up" for pastoral couples. This is designed to bring three pastoral couples into a coaching experience over a four day period of time to help in the prevention of burnout. The "50,000 Mile Check Up" will be comprised of

1. Assessments

The pastoral couple completes a questionaire, an assessment of their marriage, and a strengths survey. Pastors complete assessments on their personal values, vison and their ministry values and vision and a DVD of their preaching.

2. Coaching

A coaching model is used which will take the focus away from the counselor, teacher or mentor and focus the experiences on the pastoral couples in attendance. The coaching ministry uses all these relationships, but as a coach drawing out of the couples what God has put in their hearts.   It is the application of Proverbs 20:5, "A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out." The coaches work with couples in the areas of marriage, the pastor's personal values and vision and his minstry values and vision.

3. Teaching

A series of seven sessions are prepared and presented to the three couples during the "Check Up." These messages from 1 Kings 19 are to provide a biblical foundation for

helping to prevent burnout or help restore from burnout in the lives of the pastoral couples.

4. **Game Plan**

   Each couple departs with specific action steps, strategies and goals. This "Game Plan" is created through the interaction of each pastoral couple with all the coaches. They have specific outcomes for their marriage, the pastor's personal values and vision and his ministry values and vision.

Outcomes

Through the project, pastoral couples are helped to address the draining and discouraging circumstances, ministry, or structures that are contributing to their discouragement and potential burnout. The couples gain self awareness of their strengths for life, marriage and ministry and identify ways of rebuilding their marriage, ministry and ministry teams. The couples make decisions concerning their need for accountability and/or counseling and set up those plans before departing from the "50,000 Mile Check Up". The couples determine the goals, strategies and action steps needed to create balance in their marriage and ministry so that they may not experience burnout.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF PASTORAL BURNOUT

In 2003, H. B. London and Neil Wiseman revised their book *Pastors at Risk* and updated

the book's title to *Pastors at Greater Risk.* In their survey of pastors, they found that 91 percent

of pastors feel very satisfied about being in ministry and 75 percent say they want to stay in

ministry.[1] Pastors were asked if they would choose ministry as their career if they had to do it

over. Of those responding, 86 percent of pastors said they would make the same choice again.[2]

Well Evers and Welko Tomic reported an even higher response to choosing the same pastoral

profession. Responding to the question, as a pastor, would you choose the same profession, 98

percent of the Dutch Reformed pastors would choose the same profession.[3] In 2007, Tom Smith

of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago conducted a study on "Job

Satisfaction in the United States." He noted, "The most satisfying jobs are mostly professions,

especially those involving caring for, teaching and protecting others and creative pursuits.

Heading the list are members of the clergy with a mean score of 3.79 and 87.3% satisfied."[4] The

study also addressed general happiness with a job. Smith stated, "Most of the occupations

ranking high in general happiness are professions involving helping others, technical and science

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[1] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed. (Vetura: Gospel Light
Publications, 2003), 188.

[2] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 62.

[3] Will Evers and Welko Tomic, "Burnout Among Dutch Reformed Pastors," *Journal of Psychology and
Theology* 31, no. 4 (2003): 336.

[4] Tom Smith, "Job Satisfaction in the United States," National Opinion Research Center,
http://norc.org/publications/satisfaction.htlm p. 1 (accessed October 18, 2010).

expertise, or creativity. The occupations with the happiest people is the clergy with 67.2% vey happy."[5] Research shows that pastors enjoy what they are doing and want to do what they are doing.

The research of London and Wiseman also provides the downside of pastoral ministry. From a family perspective, 80 percent of pastors believe that the pastoral ministry affects their families negatively.[6] Even with such high job satisfaction being reported, 30 percent of pastors have considered leaving the pastorate.[7] Concerning the negative impact of the pastorate on their personal lives, 45.5 percent of pastors say they have experienced depression or burnout to the extent that they needed to take a leave of absence from ministry.[8] Pastor's wives have also identified this same problem of burnout. Of the pastor's wives surveyed, 45 percent say the greatest danger to them and their family is physical, emotional, mental and spiritual burnout.[9]

"Recent studies have shown that a worrying proportion of pastors leave ordained ministry burned out, wounded, emotionally and spiritually damaged, some never to return either as pastors or lay persons."[10] William Whitaker, II conducted a study of clergy in the Richmond, Virginia and Roanoke, Virginia. Whitaker reported that of his 142 respondents, 81 percent experienced stress/burnout in their ministries.[11] The group of pastors in Roanoke,

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[5] Tom Smith, "Job Satisfaction in the United States," 2.

[6] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 20.

[7] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 170.

[8] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 170.

[9] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 118.

[10] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," *Congregations*, May/June 2002, 11-12.

[11] William Whitaker II, "The Elijah Project: A Study of Clergy in Crisis" (D. Min. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 2000), 113.

Virginia reported that 90 percent of the pastors have experienced burnout.[12] Mission Growth

Ministries conducted a study for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and "found that

approximately 40 percent of the denomination's pastors were experiencing mild to severe

burnout."[13] Burnout has been studied for the pastors in Anglican parishes,[14] Roman Catholic

secular, religious and monastic clergy serving in the United States,[15] Catholic Priests in India,[16]

evangelical Protestant denominations, and clergy throughout the United States.[17] This is why

David Olsen and William Grosch begin their article with, "Clergy burnout is a concern of all

religious denominations."[18]

Burnout Defined

Burnout has been a study that began with a focus on human services professions such

as teachers, therapists, lawyers and nurses. Since burnout is work related it has been associated

with business managers and leaders, coaches, athletes, volunteers and parents.[19] Pines and

Aronson state, "Burnout is formerly defined and subjectively experienced as a state of physical,

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[12] William Whitaker II, "The Elijah Project: A Study of Clergy in Crisis," 96.

[13] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 112.

[14] Kelvin Randall, "Burnout as a Predictor of Leaving Anglican Parish Ministry," *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 1 (2004): 20-26.

[15] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," *Pastoral Psychology* 47, no. 1 (1998): 49-67.

[16] Antony Raj and Karol Dean, "Burnout and Depression Among Catholic Priests in India," *Pastoral Psychology* 54, no. 2 (November 2005): 157-70.

[17] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," *Pastoral Psychology* 53, no. 6 (July 2005): 563-81.

[18] David Olsen and William Grosch, "Clergy Burnout: A Self Psychology and Systems Perspective," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 45, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 297.

[19] Wilmar B. Schaufeli, ed., Christina Maslach, ed. and Tadeusz Marek, ed., *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1993), 12.

emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding."[20] Christina Maslach developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to test for burnout. This has become the standard inventory for measuring burnout. Permission has been granted for modifications for various professions. Since the MBI was designed for human service professionals, the term "client" was used. For clergy, this term was inappropriate. In 2004, a modified form of the MBI was approved by Consulting Psychologists Press for the clergy.[21] Schaufeli, Maslach and Merek define burnout as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity."[22]

Emotional exhaustion is "when people feel exhaustion, they feel overextended, both emotionally and physically. They feel drained, used up and unable to unwind and recover....They lack the energy to face another project or another person."[23] Pines and Aronson add, "Emotional exhaustion....involves primarily feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and entrapment."[24] Depersonalization is when people feel cynical. "They take a cold, distant attitude toward work and people on the job. They minimize their involvement in work and even give up their ideals."[25] And reduced accomplishment means they no longer have personal achievement. They feel ineffective. "When people feel ineffective, they feel a growing sense of

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[20] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed. (New York: Free Pr, 1988), 9.

[21] Kelvin Randall, "Burnout as a Predictor of Leaving Anglican Parish Ministry," 22.

[22] Schaufeli Wilmar B., ed., Christina Maslach, ed. and Tadeusz Marek, ed., *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research*, 20.

[23] Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter, *The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It* (Palo Alto: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 17.

[24] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 13.

[25] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.

inadequacy. Every new project seems overwhelming....They lose confidence in themselves,

others lose confidence in them."[26]

After counseling pastors who are burned out and observing this process over years, G.

Lloyd Rediger describes pastoral burnout syndrome as:

> Physically. Low energy. Weight change. Exhausted appearance. Significant change in sleep patterns. Motor difficulties such as lack of coordination, tremors, twitches. Frequent headaches and gastric upset. Loss of sexual vigor. Hypochondriacally complaints.
> Emotionally. Apathy. One-track mind and loss of creativity. Paranoid obsessions. Constant irritability. Constant worrying. Loss of humor or development of 'gallows humor.' Sporadic efforts to act as if everything is back to normal. Complaints of loneliness. Inability to be playful or become interested in diversionary activities. Excessive crying. Random thought patterns and inability to concentrate. Hopelessness.
> Spiritually. Significant changes in moral behavior. Drastic change in theological statements. Loss of prayer and meditation disciplines. Development of moral judgementalism. Loss of faith in God, the church, and themselves. One-track preaching and teaching. Listless and perfunctory performance of clergy-role duties. Loss of joy and celebration in spiritual endeavors.[27]

Causes of Pastoral Burnout

Henri Nouwen was a Catholic priest, teacher and writer. He battled clinical depression

and shared his life with mentally handicapped people at the L'Arche community in Toronto,

Ontario. In 1989, He made the following observation about the difficulty of ministry in the

church, "There is little praise and much criticism in the church today, and who can live for long

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[26] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.

[27] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout* (Valley Forge: Judson Pr, 1982), 15-16.

in such a climate without slipping into some type of depression."[28] Pastors do find themselves

expecting to be depressed or burned out from ministry, but they discover that they had been

"slipping into some type of depression" or burnout over time. The ongoing responsibilities of

the pastorate and the routine of every day ministry hinder the pastor from seeing what toll the

ministry is taking on him. And this ongoing unchecked toll on the pastor's life leads to burnout.

Summarizing the research and studies of pastor burnout, there are five primary causes of

pastoral burnout: misunderstood pastoral awareness, unclear congregational organization and

expectations, lack of social networking and support, distraction from spiritual engagement and

priority, and pastoral systemic problems and sin.

Misunderstood Pastoral Awareness

Pastoral awareness is having a self awareness of who one is. It looks at personality, age

and expectations. These three components have a specific impact on the cause of burnout.

Personality

Richard Foss concluded in his study of the correlation of personality to clergy burnout

that, "neurotic personality was correlated with burnout among clergy and helping professionals;

neuroticism may serve as one long-range predicator of burnout among persons preparing for

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[28] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 32.

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either ministerial or helping occupations."[29] Foss in his study has defined neuroticism "as a general tendency to experience negative affect and a susceptibility to irrational ideas, stress and poor impulse control."[30] If one has a tendency toward negative feelings or emotions, they would be at a greater risk for burnout.

In a survey of Dutch pastors from the Dutch Reformed Church, Reformed Church of Netherlands and the Roman Catholic Church, Hessel Zondag identified 69 percent of pastors had a personality type of centrifugal narcissism.[31] Zondag provides this description of centrifugal narcissism:

> Centrifugal narcissism is an outwardly directed comparison with others. Those strongly characterized by this dimension consider themselves capable of persuading others to do what they want them to do and believe that they have executive skills. In addition, they think they are perceived by others as people who can fend for themselves, that they generally have a good idea of what is going on in other people's minds, and they can put others on the right track.[32]

With this personality type, these pastors "acknowledge the fact that they influence others while not feeling duped by other's influence on them"[33] Zondag concludes, "Narcissism manifests

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[29] Richard Foss, "Burnout Among Clergy and Helping Professionals: Situational and Personality Correlates" (Ph. D diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2001), 83.

[30] Richard Foss, "Burnout Among Clergy and Helping Professionals: Situational and Personality Correlates," 55.

[31] Hessel Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors." *Pastoral Psychology* 52, no. 5 (May 2004): 432.

[32] Hessel Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors," 430.

[33] Hessel Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors," 432.

itself in matters such as self-appreciation, empathy, job satisfaction, susceptibility to burnout,

and job performance evaluation."[34]

Dr. Pan Shinhwan identifies that the narcissistic personality is prevalent in Korean

ministry. He then describes how this personality is exhibited:

> Narcissism is correlated with grandiosity, exhibitionism, disregard for other's criticism,
> dominance and hostility….Narcissistic individuals seek for evidence of their
> superiority….believe in the importance of appearances….consider other people as tools
> in their quest for superiority….exaggerate their own capabilities and other's
> weaknesses….likely to repress sadness, guilt, and uncertainty and feel anger and self
> admiration easily….likely to pursue huge success as evidence of their superiority.[35]

Personality is not a predictor of burnout for those with these personality types of

narcissism and neuroticism; however, people with these personality types are at a higher risk for

burnout. The goal is not to change the personality of pastors, but to have and understanding

one's personality type provides a pastoral self-awareness. As Charles Stone reminds us, "The

more self-aware we become, the more we can take constructive action in areas detrimental to

us, our families, and our churches."[36]

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[34] Hessel, Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors," 434

[35] Pan Shinhwan, "Pastoral Counseling of Korean Clergy with Burnout: Culture and Narcissism," *Asia journal of Theology* 20, no. 1 (2006): 251-252.

[36] Charles Stone, Five Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them: Help for Frustrated Pastors (Bloomington: Bethany House, 2010), 135.

Age

Burnout is more common among younger pastors than older pastors. "When under 30 age group were compared to 60-64 age group, the younger group scored higher on Emotional Exhaustion and on Depersonalization"[37] Zondag, in his study of the personality of narcissism contributing to pastoral burnout, stated, that "the centrifugal narcissism is more prevalent among young pastors than among older pastors."[38] He suggests that this could be due to the "influence of culture that is becoming more and more individualistic."[39] Another possible explanation would be, "As a person gains more life experience, centrifugal narcissism diminishes…..A certain modesty, rooted in wisdom, replaces the fervent desire to secure one's place in the world."[40]

The age of the pastor may be connected with other factors. A younger pastor has not developed the skills for planning and organization and may not have learned the skills of dealing with conflict and congregational life. His age makes him susceptible to burnout. The Center for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism has identified church and faith trends. One trend they identify is "that younger pastors are more negative about their churches. Younger pastors also have lower job satisfaction."[41] In his study, Sam Reimer suggests, "Younger pastors may be more likely to find work in less healthy churches (because the older pastors don't want those jobs) or less established churches (such as church plants) which negatively affect their job

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[37] Kelvin Randall, "Burnout as a Predictor of Leaving Anglican Parish Ministry," 24.

[38] Hessel Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors," 433.

[39] Hessel Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors," 433.

[40] Hessel Zondag, "Just Like Other People: Narcissism Among Pastors," 433.

[41] Sam Reimer, "Pastoral Well-Being: Findings from Canadian Evangelical Churches Study," *Church and Faith Trends* 3, no. 2 (August 2010): page 9.

satisfaction."[42]   Since job satisfaction or personal accomplishment is associated with burnout,

Reimer points out the significance of this issue for the future of the church. He states, "The

lower job satisfaction (and lower opinion of their congregation) of younger pastors is

disconcerting for denominations who face a shortage of young leaders. Surely this would

indicate that young pastors are more susceptible to burnout and leaving ministry."[43] Richard

Foss agrees with this conclusion but also notes that the first years of ministry, like age, is a

contributor to burnout. "There is evidence that the risk of burnout among clergy is greatest

during the first years of ministry and then gradually declines."[44]

David McKown conducted research on conflict in ministry. In his study, they expected

to see "a relationship between an increase in age and a decrease in conflict and negative

consequences."[45] McKown had this conclusion about age and conflict, "As the age of the

participants increased, negative consequence variables like depression, burnout and other

variables significantly decreased or were in the expected direction."[46] This means that younger

pastors face greater intrapersonal conflict, substantive conflict with groups and leaders,

frequency of conflicts and severity of conflicts and a greater risk of burnout.[47]

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[42] Sam Reimer, "Pastoral Well-Being: Findings from Canadian Evangelical Churches Study," 10.

[43] Sam Reimer, "Pastoral Well-Being: Findings from Canadian Evangelical Churches Study," 10.

[44] Richard Foss, "Burnout Among Clergy and Helping Professionals: Situational and Personality Correlates," 81.

[45] David McKown, "Pastors in Conflict: The Nature, Extent, Contributing Factors, and Consequences of Conflict in Ministry" (diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2001), 59.

[46] David McKown, "Pastors in Conflict: The Nature, Extent, Contributing Factors, and Consequences of Conflict in Ministry," 83.

[47] David McKown, "Pastors in Conflict: The Nature, Extent, Contributing Factors, and Consequences of Conflict in Ministry," 83.

Unclear Congregational Organization and Expectations

Congregational organization and life looks at the relational and organizational structure

of the church. It may be the indicators of a healthy church or an unhealthy church. Pastors may

face factors contributing to burnout which deal with job ambiguity, ministry competency,

organizational priorities, and church conflict.

Job Ambiguity

Job ambiguity relates to the job description of the pastor, his expectations, leader's

expectations and the congregation's expectations of the pastor. When job descriptions or

expectations are not clearly written and defined, pastors struggle with job ambiguity. "Among

clergy, burnout appears to be associated with organizational problems such as unclear or

disputed job descriptions and an overload of administrative work that seems unrelated to

ministry."[48]

This job ambiguity results from a lack of organizational commitment. Organizational

commitment is needed by both the pastor and the congregation to bring about a healthy

church. In a hospital study of nurses and support staff, it "revealed that high levels of burnout

were related to diminished employee organizational commitment."[49] In the life of the church,

the commitment of the congregation and the commitment of the pastor have a great impact on

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[48] Richard Foss, "Burnout Among Clergy and Helping Professionals: Situational and Personality Correlates," 80-81.

[49] Jason Berry, "The Relationships Among Leadership Practices, Organizational Climate, and Organizational Commitment Within Church Ministry Settings" (Ph. D. diss., Regent University, July 2008), 9.

the church. Pastor burnout and turnover are related to these commitments. "A reduction in congregational and pastor organizational commitment leads to an increase in the likelihood of pastor burnout as well as an increase in pastoral turnover."[50]

Ministry Competency

Pastors expect to be pastors and serve as pastors; however in an ever changing world the ministry skills needed to pastor in this world are changing. A pastor's sense of self worth comes from his ability to carry out his pastoral call. The pastor wants to be competent and the congregation expects him to be competent. "The growth of industries such as counseling and self-help resources in spirituality encroach upon the traditional roles of the minister."[51] With these changes taking place, pastors "need to acquire new skills and vocabulary in order to retain occupational and congregational credibility."[52] The authors of this study among Australian pastors concluded, "Thus, in this study, ministers experiencing more difficulties with a sense of spiritual connectedness, autonomy, and competence experienced greater burnout and distress than those reporting less difficulties."[53]

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[50] Jason Berry, "The Relationships Among Leadership Practices, Organizational Climate, and Organizational Commitment Within Church Ministry Settings," 9.

[51] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 4 (2009): 466.

[52] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," 466.

[53] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," 476.

The Alban Institute conducted a survey about the stresses and challenges pastors face. In the report it stated, "Seventy-four percent of pastors responding to our survey reported that the greatest stress they experience relates to having 'too many demands on their time.'"[54] The study itself was unable to provide any clarification to this problem pastors face. However in their focus group, they were able to identify the problem. "Overwhelmingly, the pastors in the focus group told us that they felt incompetent in determining priorities among the competing values and ideals that guide their ministries, and that they were unable to distinguish between goal setting with reference to their congregational ministries and goal setting in their own professional and personal life."[55] The pastors said, "They did not know how to determine which meetings were more crucial than others, which ideas deserved closer scrutiny, immediate planning, or omission, and which committees required their attention, because they simply did not know how to critically assess the essential values that might guide them in their investment of time and energy."[56] These same pastors "reported that they are 'flying by the seat of their pants,' with little organizational consensus in their congregations (or comprehension in their own minds) as to how they should sort through the variety of issues, concerns, and crisis that cry out for their attention."[57]

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[54] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 3.

[55] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 3.

[56] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 3.

[57] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 3.

Organizational Priorities

In the life of the church, pastors, leaders and the congregation sense that they are all desiring to follow Christ and to be the church that fosters a love for Christ and the fellowship of the saints. However what we say we want and what we want are two different things. In the *5 Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them,* Charles Stone provides some recent research about frustrated pastors. The issue bothering pastors the most involves "people's commitment to the local church (roughly 60 percent). Issues that hinder ministry growth, such as attendance, giving, volunteering, general local-church commitment, what the church expects of me as a pastor, the church's response to my leadership, and church direction."[58]   To put this emphasis in perspective, Stone compares the importance of the organizational issues of the church to spiritual growth issues and relationship issues. He states, "pastors say organizational issues bother them more than issues related to the spiritual health of the people they serve by a 3-to-8 margin. And when comparing church organizational issues to concerns about how people relate to each other, it was a 4-to-1 margin."[59]

Unfortunately, pastors are creating their slippery slope to burnout by the emphases and priorities they give to the organizational structure of the church. It would appear that pastors are more concerned about "'buildings, budgets, and numbers in the pews' than spiritual growth and healthy relationships."[60] Charles Stone concludes his observations by including himself in how we pastors think. He writes, "However, because we pastors get sideways over

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[58] Charles Stone, *Five Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them: Help for Frustrated Pastors*, 66.

[59] Charles Stone, *Five Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them: Help for Frustrated Pastors*, 66.

[60] Charles Stone, *Five Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them: Help for Frustrated Pastors*, 68

organizational issues much more often than we do when our people don't live out the Great

Commandment, we should start paying a different kind of attention. It appears that we've

skewed our priorities."[61] And with these skewed organizational priorities, pastors are on the

path for burnout. In fact, "a striking feature of people suffering from burnout is that mental

organizational principles seem to abandon them: they cannot distinguish between essentials

and details, let alone set priorities."[62]

Conflict

Conflict can occur with individuals, groups or the organization.[63] Pastors can face

intrapersonal conflict, substantive conflict with groups and leaders and various frequencies of

conflicts as well as severity of conflicts.[64]. H. B. London and Neil Wiseman identity that for

pastors "40 percent report a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month."[65] When

William Whitaker II surveyed three clergy groups in Virginia, 74 percent of the pastors reported

having had conflicts with their staff and church members."[66] "Two-thirds of pastors reported

that their congregation experienced a conflict during the past two years; more than 20 percent

of those were significant enough that members left the congregation."[67] In the Alban Institute

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[61] Charles Stone, *Five Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them: Help for Frustrated Pastors*, 68.

[62] Will Evers and Welko Tomic, "Burnout Among Dutch Reformed Pastors," 329.

[63] David McKown, "Pastors in Conflict: The Nature, Extent, Contributing Factors, and Consequences of Conflict in Ministry," 85.

[64] David McKown, "Pastors in Conflict: The Nature, Extent, Contributing Factors, and Consequences of Conflict in Ministry," 83.

[65] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 20.

[66] William Whitaker II, "The Elijah Project: A Study of Clergy in Crisis," 113.

[67] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 62.

Survey, *Great Expectations, Sobering Realities,* they noted, "Pastors consistently reported that interpersonal conflicts – ordinary grind of disagreements over policies and goals and personalities in the churches – were among the more difficult aspects of pastoral leadership."[68] The research team was not surprised that conflict was a difficult part of pastoral leadership but they were surprised that "the aspect of these conflicts that caused the pastors the greatest distress was not the technical, but the personal."[69] Jinkins identifies that these conflicts were not the ones that plague the denominations,

> Rather, the small betrayals of trust, the corrosive influences of malicious gossip and backbiting, the apathy and despair of declining congregations (several of the pastors serve small congregations in rural communities where populations were declining for decades), the thoughtless and snide remarks, the passive-aggressive digs among members and staff, the feelings of being stuck or trapped in a bad situation, of having leadership subverted by retired pastors in the congregation or by the pastors who preceded them in a congregation but refuse to give up influence there, of hearing the same complaints over and over again in the face of insolvable dilemmas – these are the kinds of things pastors say wear away their morale and try their souls.[70]

David McKown provides insight and understanding of the role of conflict with burnout when he writes, "a useful way of looking at the relationship between conflict and burnout is that ongoing conflict without healthy coping resources, combined with the draining nature of a people-helping job, engages a gradual burnout process."[71] Pastors face conflict on a regular basis, that is part of the ministry; but pastors are not aware that this ongoing conflict is taking an

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[68] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 13.

[69] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 13.

[70] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 13.

[71] David McKown, "Pastors in Conflict: The Nature, Extent, Contributing Factors, and Consequences of Conflict in Ministry," 78.

ongoing toll on them and that if it goes unresolved or they find no help or resources, it will lead them to burnout.

Lack of Social Networking and Support

Pastors serve local churches which are made of people who are building relationships in ministry together and in the life of the church. Churches and pastors often speak of the fellowship and community of the saints. Amidst this regular interaction and working together in the life of the church, pastors report of being lonely and isolated. A survey of pastors in Richmond and Roanoke, Virginia had 68 percent of the pastors indicating that they felt isolated and lonely.[72] From the book, *Pastors at Greater Risk,* "70 percent of pastors do not have someone they consider a close friend."[73] This also true of the pastor's spouse, "56 percent of pastor's wives say that they have no close friends."[74] The lack of friends, the sense of loneliness, and the feelings of isolation are true for both the pastor and his wife in ministry. "It would therefore appear that those clergy who experience burnout most, tend to become more socially isolated from their work and their congregations."[75]

Stephen Virginia did a study of Roman Catholic priests serving as secular, religious and monastic priests. He compared these priests to find out which were at greater risk for burnout and depression. Working with the description of burnout by Maslach and Jackson of emotional

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[72] William Whitaker II, "The Elijah Project: A Study of Clergy in Crisis," 113.

[73] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 264.

[74] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 118.

[75] Leslie J. Francis, Peter Hills and Peter Kaldor, "The Oswald Clergy Burnout Scale: Reliability, Factor Structure and Preliminary Application Among Australian Clergy," *Pastoral Psychology* 57 (2009): 250.

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exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment,[76] Virginia added "four categories

of predicator variables (i.e., vocational satisfaction, social support, spiritual life, and physical

environment) were compared by clergy group."[77] The benefit of this study is that it compared

clergy of similar calling and ministry structures but serving in different settings. The secular

priests, "serve in parochial settings in secular society."[78] These priests are most similar in their

ministry setting to that of Protestant and Evangelical pastors. The Religious Ordered priests

"belong to a religious order, society, or community and live some rule of life based upon a

founding father....Theirs is a life split between the secular world and the sacred enclosure of

their community dwelling."[79] These priests will have ministry in the secular world and outside of

their community dwelling, but they live together in community with other priests of their

religious orders. The monastic clergy "live almost exclusively within the monastic community

and monastery and generally live out their ministerial life within the confines of their cloistered

house."[80]

As Virginia compared these clergy groups he discovered that the secular priests

"experienced greater emotional exhaustion than did monastic priests."[81] Also, secular clergy

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[76] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 50.

[77] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 50.

[78] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 50.

[79] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 50.

[80] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 50..

[81] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 61.

revealed a higher degree of depression (72%) than did both the religious and monastic clergy."[82]

He concludes, "Secular clergy experienced the greatest burnout and depression."[83] This

becomes significant because this study was exploring the impact of social networking on

burnout. The study examined the support the priests received from their Superior, their peers,

the opportunity they had to be with other priests and the opportunity they had to discuss their

concerns with others. Concerning the perceived support from peers and their Superior, the

secular priests perceived they received less support. They also perceived that they had less

ability to be in the company of other priests and having the ability to discuss their concerns with

other clergy or people. Virginia concludes "Note that on every social support variable studied

that secular clergy were significantly different from either the religious and/or monastic clergy

or both."[84]

Pastors are at greater risk of burnout when they lack the social networking and support

of others. The lack of social support may come from the denominational leader overseeing the

pastor under his care. The lack of support may also come from the pastor's peers, fellow

pastors within his denomination, ministry association or his own church community. The lack of

support may be greatest for those pastors serving outside denominations or church associations

who have no regular opportunity to get together with other pastors. And finally, the lack of

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[82] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 61.

[83] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 61.

[84] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 55.

support may be for those pastors who do not have a fellow pastor or friend who they may discuss their concerns about ministry, marriage or family.

In a study by McMinn et al., pastors were asked how they cope with the stress of the ministry. The responses were intrapersonal, family, and community. The pastors indicated that 69 percent of their coping was through intrapersonal methods (time off, prayer, exercise, meditation/solitude, healthy eating, scripture, personal hobbies, maintaining priorities, trusting God, having joy, personal retreats, study and ministry activities.)[85] In the area of relational coping, "12 percent were classified under the category of family."[86] "External coping in the area of community (outside of the family) made up 19% of the total responses. The subcategories for community were therapy, support, team sports, conferences, worship/fellowship, bible study and trusted friends."[87] From these statistics, the authors conclude, "Resources for coping with stress and engaging in self-care for clergy most typically comes from intrapersonal sources."[88] With all the people around pastors for congregational life and ministry in the church, pastors provide their own self care when dealing with stress and crisis in ministry. Pastors are not likely to turn to networking with other pastors or looking to any support ministry for help. This again makes them susceptible to burnout. "One of the most robust findings of our first four studies is that the clergy do most of their care alone."[89]

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[85] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 573.

[86] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 573.

[87] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 573.

[88] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 573.

[89] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 576.

For pastors, "The marriage relationship is often the sole refuge where deep emotions can be expressed, struggles at work disclosed, and ambivalence about pastoral role discussed."[90] "Interactions outside of marriage – such as friendships, mentoring, and accountability relationships – are also important for some pastors, but surprisingly few mention these as primary coping resources."[91] But even if pastors want to develop personal relationships that encourage them and allow them to talk openly about their ministry or marriage, "a 'lone ranger' mentality, for example, undermines the kind of networks of support and community that sustains people over time."[92]

According to Jinkins, 64 percent of pastors "who are in ministerial support groups, including lectionary groups, generally speak positively of the experience, often citing such groups as a significant resource for their emotional health and effectiveness in ministry."[93] After reviewing the data closer, Jinkins makes this final comment, "However, easily 36 percent of the pastors we surveyed do not participate in any such group, and often the groups that do meet (another 33 percent) function largely without intentionality, structure, or mutual accountability."[94] It important for pastors to understand and know that,

> Friendship sustains pastors over time and not simply during crises – it is the kind of collegiality that is crucial to the cultivation of self-knowledge, relational intelligence, the capacity to remain dynamically engaged with one's work and the ability to identify and negotiate conflict, all of which are relevant to the dynamics that cause pastors to leave pastoral ministry.[95]

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[90] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 578.

[91] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 579.

[92] L. Gregory Jones, "Needy Pastors," *Christian Century*, June 15-22, 1994, 62.

[93] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 6.

[94] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 6.

[95] David J. Wood, "Why Pastors Leave Exit Interview," *Christian Century*, December 13, 2005, 33.

Concerning the pastor's relationship with his congregation and the importance of social networking and support, Eugene Peterson refers to this ministry in the church as "collaborative relationship."[96] It is not the "self-care" of the pastor, but a committing to mutuality. Peterson comments, "I don't think pastors 'burn out' because they work too hard. People who work hard often do so because they're good at what they're doing and they enjoy doing it. I think burn out comes from working with no relational gratification."[97]

Distraction from Spiritual Engagement and Priority

Bill Hull has written extensively about discipleship in the church and by the pastor. At age 50, he said of his life, "I was hooked on results, addicted to recognition, and a product of my times, I was a get-it-done leader who was ready to lead people into the rarified air of religious competition. Like so many pastors I was addicted to what others thought of me."[98] On a three year journey, Bill watched a steady flow of people leave the church. He writes, "It was the painful experience of my pastoral life, and so many times I wanted to run away."[99] "As more people departed, it felt like a plague had descended on us, but it wasn't just poisoning our community – it was eating away at my soul."[100] As Bill Hull writes, he describes this time as

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[96] David Wood, "Committing to Mutuality: An Interview with Eugene Peterson," The Alban Institute, www.alban.org/conversation, 2.

[97] David Wood, "Committing to Mutuality: An Interview with Eugene Peterson," 4.

[98] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," ChristianityToday.com, http:/www.christainitytoday.com/le/2005/summer/6.26.html, 1 (accessed October 21, 2010).

[99] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2.

[100] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2.

feeling, "betrayed and wounded" and in his "'dark night of the soul.'"[101] Though he does not

use the term burnout, there is a sense of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced

personal accomplishment that he is experiencing. He then comes to a personal awareness, "I

gradually realized that something was missing in my life. It was the same thing that my church

growth generation had missed. I had forgotten that my life as a leader should be a reflection of

my relationship to Christ."[102] Bill Hull had moved away from the outward motivations and

measurements of ministry success and to reflect on the distraction in his life by success,

competition, and the church growth movement to move toward the spiritual engagement and

priority that Jesus Christ wanted in his life. He writes, "Leadership is not about competency and

productivity, as we have been led to believe. Our culture values action over contemplation,

individualism over community, speed over endurance, fame over humility, and success over the

satisfied soul."[103] The outcome of this dark night journey resulted in Bill choosing a new life.

"Through pain, meditation on Scripture, prayer, and learning from others, I chose a new life. I

chose the life of Jesus – a new commitment to humility, submission, service and sacrifice. I

chose to finally trust Jesus' way of leading."[104] The lack of spiritual engagement and priority in

his life, led Bill Hull on a "dark journey of the soul" which for many pastors would be burnout.

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[101] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2.

[102] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2.

[103] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2.

[104] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2. The full story of Bill Hull's journey through his "dark night of the soul" and the transformation of him and his church' journey toward spiritual transformation in his book Hull, Bill, and Dallas Willard. *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2004.

In Stephen Virginia's study of priests, he noted that the fact that secular clergy "engage in less spiritual activity...contribute to their higher levels of burnout and depression."[105] The religious and monastic clergy led their lives around a rule of life which provide structure for their spiritual life and activities. For the secular clergy, Virginia concluded, "unless there is some rule of life to help delineate what his proper role is inside the community he may experience even greater burnout and depression in the future."[106]

In the Alban study concerning the sobering realities of the pastorate, they discovered, "Relatively few pastors are involved in regular disciplines of Bible study and prayer. Sixty-two percent are not 'involved in disciplined study of sermon texts' 62 percent do not 'have disciplined or scheduled times for study,' and 51 percent do not have 'disciplined scheduled times for prayer.'"[107] Like the secular clergy of the Catholic church, these protestant pastors face the same possibility and "may experience even greater burnout and depression in the future."[108]

Burnout research has demonstrated that the combination of personality and work environment are the factors for burnout. As researchers looked into clergy burnout, the additional question raised concerned the factor of spirituality in burnout. In a study of clergy, researchers were able to isolate the personality and work environment and test the validity of

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[105] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 65.

[106] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 65.

[107] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 24.

[108] Stephen Virginia, "Burnout and Depression Among Roman Catholic Secular, Religious, and Monastic Clergy," 65.

spirituality as a contributor to burnout for clergy.[109] The researchers concluded, "It would seem

spirituality, and especially that which connects one with the Transcendent, does indeed tell us

something about burnout among clergy that personality and work environment do not tell us.

The less one feels oneself in an intimate relationship with the Divine, the greater the likelihood

of burnout."[110] This study also identified more specifically how this spirituality was expressed.

"Spirituality, and especially that quality of spirituality which relates the individual to God

through prayer or meditation, was also shown to be an important additional component to

burnout."[111] Diane Chandler studied burnout among pastors to see the impact of personal

spiritual renewal. She determined, "Spiritual dryness emerged as the primary predicator of

emotional exhaustion, the stress dimension of burnout."[112] Chandler identifies that for pastors,

the lack of spiritual engagement and priority may lead to burnout. She concludes, "This finding

reinforces the premise that pastors, by virtue of their calling, need to nurture an ongoing and

renewing relationship with God to maintain life balance, reduce stress, and avoid burnout."[113]

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[109] Jonathan Golden, Ralph L. Piedmont, Joseph W. Ciarrocchi and Thomas Rodgerson, "Spirituality and Burnout; An Incremental Validity Study," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 32, no. 2 (2004): 115-25.
[110] Jonathan Golden, Ralph L. Piedmont, Joseph W. Ciarrocchi and Thomas Rodgerson, "Spirituality and Burnout; An Incremental Validity Study," 123.
[111] Jonathan Golden, Ralph L. Piedmont, Joseph W. Ciarrocchi and Thomas Rodgerson, "Spirituality and Burnout; An Incremental Validity Study," 124.
[112] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," *Pastoral Psychology* 58 (2009): 284.
[113] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 284.

Burnout literature focuses primary attention on the work environment which causes

emotional exhaustions, depersonalization and reduced accomplishment.   This makes burnout a

result of the environment and to deal with burnout will be making behavioral changes in the

work environment. In the five-year research study of "high Flyers" in the workplace, Tim

Casserley and David Megginson state, "our findings point to burnout being a function of the

relationship between the individual high flyer and their work environment."[114] Casserly and

Megginson are identifying that the individual is also responsible for their burnout. It is not just

caused by the work environment, there is something that is within the worker that makes him

responsible for burning out.   These "high flyers" shared similar personality traits and

characteristics:

> We found their most widely shared characteristic to be over-identification with work
> and career, leading to little inner sense of self and a fragile sense of identity. These
> were perfectionists who ignored their own and their loved one's needs in favor of work,
> never willing to say no to the demand of the client or employer, however unreasonable,
> and convinced that their job was on the line at all times. A 'dysfunctional closeness' with
> work drove them on.[115]

Casserley and Megginson make this bold statement about these "high flyers," "although

organizations create the conditions for burnout, it is the individual, through their choices, who

determine whether they burn out."[116] They "explained that the learning emerging from burnout

was systemic in as much as it concerned whole-person change and the transformation of

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[114] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment* (Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2009), xiii.

[115] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 110.

[116] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 110.

identify and purpose towards full adult maturity."[117] This means that there is something to be learned and gained from burnout because there is something lacking in the worker. Burnout is a tool that is able to shape and mature the individual. This change that takes place is described as "Personal myths are revised or comprehensively recreated. Purposes are grounded in a profound sense of fundamental reason for existence. Consciousness is transformed such that the way in which the high flyer makes sense of their work broadens and deepens."[118]

G. Lloyd Redieger describes pastors in a similar "high flyer" fashion. He notes "We in the helping professions tend to have a near-fatal flaw, for these professions attract bright, sensitive, visionary people. We can always think of more to do than our human limits will allow, and we tend to think we are stronger or don't have the same needs other people have."[119] He adds that pastors, "have high ideals and expectations and cannot adapt these to the limitations of their situations and may burn out in frustration."[120] Pastors are the identified leaders of our society's chief moral-valuing institution. As such, they are expected to model perfection, to have all the answers to moral questions, and to make everything work out right in the church."[121]

As "high flyers" in the church, these pastors are prone for burnout and this is a systemic problem. For Redieger, there is a theological foundation for handling stress and burnout. He states, "I see a direct connection between stress and sin. These words are not synonymous, however. Sin can cause stress and stress can cause sin. I am thinking of sin in the traditional

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[117] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 141.

[118] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 126

[119] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 25.

[120] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 24.

[121] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 25.

theological way here – sin as a violation of God's will and as not fulfilling our potential before God."[122]

According to G. Lloyd Redieger, this sin works its way into the pastor's life and then he plays out the "Messiah Complex." As a fellow pastor he states the outcome of this sin in that "We pretend we can actually take over responsibility for another person's life…. We pretend that our marriages, families, and financial affairs will not fail….we pretend that we can go on and on without proper rest, change of pace, exercise, nutrition, and spiritual nurture and that there will be no consequences."[123] He adds, "We pretend that, because we are in this noble calling called 'the ministry,' we somehow become free of human limits ('…you will be like God…')."[124]

Redieger concludes his understanding of this systemic problem stating, "Circumstances and sin in society may victimize some persons and pastors. This is tragic. Most burned-out pastors, however, set themselves up for this malady. They do not seem to understand that burnout is not a mark of dedication and nobility. It is usually a demonstration that they have sinned by exceeding their limits - by playing God."[125] Casserly and Megginson do not identify this problem as sin, but they conclude with a similar sentiment for "high flyers" and pastors who have a systemic problem that requires an internal conscious change. For them, the learning that is gained from burnout is that the "high flyers" recognize, "that hardship experiences are essential for the development of the leaders of tomorrow, and that burnout – as a special form

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[122] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 27.

[123] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 29.

[124] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout, 29.*

[125] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 32.

of personal trauma – has the power to catalyze maturation and accelerate the development of identify and self-transformation."[126]

Summary

The current literature and research concerning pastor burnout, identifies five primary causes of burnout: misunderstood pastoral awareness, unclear congregational organization and expectations, lack of social networking and support, distraction from spiritual engagement and priority, and pastoral systemic problems and sin. With this understanding of clergy burnout, researchers and writers have offered help and solutions to help pastors prevent and avoid burnout.

Preventing Pastoral Burnout

There is a high cost for people who have suffered burnout. Cary Cherniss conducted a 12 year study of young professionals, teachers, nurses, therapists and lawyers. He identifies some of the factors that contributed to their recovery and then identifies that something is missing in how they talked. Following their receiving and moving into new jobs he notes, "The missing factor in these interviews is the quest for meaning – or rather, the gradual

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[126] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 205.

abandonment of the quest by almost all of the professionals I studied."[127] "They entered a public service profession because they wished to serve. But they not only wished to serve, they also wished to make the world a better place to 'repair the world. That mission is what gave their lives meaning.'"[128] He adds, "When I interviewed the professionals 12 years after they began their careers, they didn't talk much about meaning, purpose, or transcendence. It just didn't seem to be a significant aspect of their work."[129] "The professionals had just learned to give up any hope of achieving meaning in work."[130]

The response of much of the research and literature has been to help employees cope with burnout, offering strategies to implement. Michael Leiter and Christina Maslach offer six strategies to improve your relationship between the mismatch of you and your job: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values.[131] Or the literature has focused on the renewal of the person who has burned out. This is offering strategies of how to come back from burnout. Wayne Cordeiro identifies "Seven Lessons Hard-Learned" from his experience with burnout and depression.[132]

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[127] Cary Cherniss, *Beyond Burnout: Helping Teachers, Nurses, Therapists and Lawyers Recover From Stress and Disillusionment* (New York: Routledge Academic, 1995), 181.

[128] Cary Cherniss, *Beyond Burnout: Helping Teachers, Nurses, Therapists and Lawyers Recover From Stress and Disillusionment*, 181.

[129] Cary Cherniss, *Beyond Burnout: Helping Teachers, Nurses, Therapists and Lawyers Recover From Stress and Disillusionment*, 182

[130] Cary Cherniss, *Beyond Burnout: Helping Teachers, Nurses, Therapists and Lawyers Recover From Stress and Disillusionment*, 182.

[131] Michael P. Leiter and Christina Maslach, *Banishing Burnout: Six Strategies for Improving Your Relationship with Work* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 14-19.

[132] Wayne Cordeiro, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2009), 118.

Tim Casserley and David Megginson take a different approach to burnout. They want

the "high flyer" to experience burnout so that they can learn from the experience. They

explored what these people learned from their experience and identified that "they were not

trying to preserve their self-esteem or their need for self-enhancement, they were not trying to

maintain a positive self-concept...."[133] "Each had discovered to a greater or lesser extent there

was little meaning to their lives, that their lives lacked purpose."[134] As a result, they now

possessed "recognition of own limitations and fallibilities; humility, greater sense of perspective,

self management and self-responsibility, and compassion for self and others."[135] And in their

study they noted the "high flyers" who did not burn out had certain characteristics; they had a

high reflexivity and open self-examination, internally referenced identity, and perspective.[136]

Their research also identified six coping dimensions of those who did not burnout; these were

"sharing, proactivity, boundary-setting, working smarter, hope and renewing."[137]

It is certain that pastors burn out in ministry and they can cope during the burnout and

they can be renewed following burnout. And it is possible for pastors to respond in certain ways

and avoid burnout. However it seems important to have a "discussion on how we as the Church

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[133] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 137.

[134] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 138.

[135] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 123.

[136] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 105-106.

[137] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 106.

might take better care of our clergy, hopefully preventing both burnout and impairment."[138] For

the pastor, there are five resources that will help him prevent burnout and keep his tank filled:

spiritual connectedness and engagement, self-awareness, social networking, continuing

education, and organizational assessment.

Spiritual Connectedness and Engagement

Lloyd Redieger in his counseling ministry counseled pastors stating, "Nurturing the spirit

and developing a spiritual discipline and relationship to God are sometimes neglected by

pastors. We may feel that we had so much theology in seminary that we don't need to study it

seriously now."[139]

Spiritual Formation and Renewal

Spiritual formation is a high priority for pastors, "86 percent of pastors say their top

priority is personal relationship with God."[140] Yet when scheduling their time, 60 percent of

pastors say the first thing they schedule are appointments and meetings.[141] Jinkins identifies

that 62% of pastors surveyed did not have scheduled times in biblical study, while 51% did not

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[138] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania" (Ph. D diss., Wheaton College Graduate School, 2004), 97.

[139] G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping With Clergy Burnout*, 101.

[140] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 264.

[141] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 216.

have scheduled times for prayer.[142] From her doctoral research on transformational leadership

and 12 years of consulting in the field, Anne Dilenschneider states that the root to pastoral

burnout is the lack of "soul care".[143] This means that the first step in ministry "was the pastor's

own attention to her or his soul-care through an intentional focus on her or his personal

relationship with the Holy."[144]

London and Wiseman write, "When a pastor experiences intimacy with Christ, it

nourishes his ministry. As he pursues holiness, it keeps his soul in shape. But when a pastor

feels perplexed, strained or fearful, his life tends to become shallow and his ministry

perfunctory."[145] In an interview, Jerry Bridges said, "The real resourcing for ministry is personal

holiness...Effective ministry to people grows out of intimate experiences with God.

Consequently, relationship with Him energizes and informs all phases of ministry."[146] Chandler,

in her study of spiritual renewal, stated, "The implications of this research finding for this study

indicate the lack of spiritual vitality negatively impacts emotional resilience, and conversely that

spiritual refreshment positively impacts emotional vitality."[147] She adds, "With spiritual dryness

being a predicator of emotional exhaustion, the need for ongoing spiritual renewal, not only

replenishes reserves but also to reenergize emotional energy, is strategic in preventing

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[142] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 24.

[143] Anne Dilenschneider, "Soul Care and the Roots of Clergy Burnout," Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anne-dilenschneider/soul-care-and-the-roots-o_b_680925.html (accessed November 6, 2010).

[144] Anne Dilenschneider, "Soul Care and the Roots of Clergy Burnout," 2.

[145] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 266.

[146] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 275.

[147] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 156-157.

burnout."[148] One of the implications of Chandler's study was, "spiritual dryness emerged as the

primary predicator of emotional exhaustion, the stress dimension of burnout. The finding

reinforces the premise that pastors, by virtue of their calling, need to nurture an ongoing and

renewing relationship with God to maintain equilibrium, reduce stress, and avoid burnout."[149]

Rest

Studies often confirm what seems to be intuitive. For example, "The less time pastors

are able to rest because of ministry involvement, the more they are apt to be emotionally

exhausted."[150] Depersonalization is a predictor of burnout. It is an attitude toward work and

people; it distances people from co-workers; it results in a minimizing involvement at work.[151]

Chandler identified that "those who did not feel rested and renewed reflected greater degrees

of depersonalization of others than those who did…. And those who felt ministry crowded out

their time to get needed rest also reflected depersonalization in their relationship with

others."[152]

An implication of Chandler's study focused on being rested and renewed. "Feeling

rested and renewed emerged as a primary predictor of depersonalization and personal

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[148]Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 157.

[149] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 167

[150] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 157.

[151] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.

[152] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 161.

accomplishment and the third predictor of emotional exhaustion….The importance of balancing

pastoral activity with adequate amounts of rest and renewal cannot be overly stated."[153] "This

research contributes to the notion that taking time for rest and refreshment produces positive

results in personal well-being which would naturally have a positive impact on pastors'

ministerial functioning."[154]

Through the support of the Lilly Foundation, two projects have emerged that help new

pastors cultivate their spiritual connectedness, renewal and rest. The Bethany Fellowships is a

program with the Disciples of Christ. In their semi-annual retreats, the pastors "enter into 24-26

hours of silence during which they are free to pray, read, take walks, or sleep. On Thursday

morning, they come together. Afterwards, they break into small groups to debrief the

experiences of the week."[155] Palen summarizes the thoughts of Don Schutt, the coordinator of

the program, by stating, "that new clergy, despite all of their training and background, still have

a need for spiritual formation."[156] Schutt then states, "'We remain committed to including a

large block of time for silence and reflection, as well as opportunity for spiritual direction, during

the retreat. We want to help the fellows understand that prayer is critical for sustaining one's

life in the congregation.'"[157]

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[153] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 168.

[154] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 168.

[155] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," *Congregations*, Fall 2006, 12.

[156] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 12.

[157] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 12.

The First Parish Project is a national ecumenical program working with pastors under the age of 35 in their first church ministry in congregations averaging in attendance no more than 100. To provide spiritual engagement and rest for these pastors, the First Parish Project hosts six retreats that meet Monday through Friday over an 18 month period. During these gatherings, the pastors meet for worship, rest, refreshment and small groups which meet for two hours a day. During their small groups, they explore the topics of the minister's life and spiritual disciplines.[158]

These two projects are building upon the research of Diane Chandler in helping new pastors prevent burnout. She concluded, "In this exploratory study experiencing both spiritual vitality, as opposed to spiritual dryness, and being rested and renewed are the greatest contributors to avoiding burnout."[159]

Self-Awareness

Character and Values

Pastors learn from their experiences and through this develop personal strategies from these events.[160] McKenna, Boyd, and Yost identify that pastors recognize the importance of

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[158] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 13.

[159] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 166.

[160] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 190-201.

"personal character and values" as a strategy of learning.[161] To facilitate their learning, pastors identified humility as the most important characteristic along with self-confidence, determination, self-awareness, patience and flexibility.[162] "The 'values' that helped pastors navigate through difficulties situations and learn from them included *acting with integrity, respect for people,* and *wanting to make a difference.*"[163]

"As expected, faith in God and calling were included by pastors when describing personal strategies that allowed them to learn from experiences."[164] "Pastors said that their *faith and trust in God, openness to their calling,* and a *willingness to submit* were critical in facing the challenging events of life."[165]

Strengths and Weaknesses

For pastors to have this ability to learn from events and experiences is associated with self awareness. "This idea of self awareness and identify of the leader has been referred to as the ability or willingness to gather feedback related to the self, to form an accurate self awareness, and to adapt one's self concept based on that information."[166] McKenna, Boyd, and

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[161] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 197.
[162] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 197.
[163] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 197.
[164] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 197.
[165] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 197.
[166] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 199.

Yost conclude, "In order to have learning agility, pastors must know their own strengths and weaknesses, and have a sense of what they believe in and what they stand for as leaders."[167]

Winseman, Clifton and Liesveld, comment on the importance of focusing on strengths and talents instead of weaknesses, "From a spiritual standpoint, when we deny our talents and instead focus on our weaknesses, on some level, we are telling God that we know best and that God somehow made a mistake in gracing us with our unique mix of talents."[168] "There is something about the concept of talents and strengths that just 'feels right.' When we discover our talents, when we give them a name, something resonates deep within us....It gives us permission to stop trying to be who we are not and concentrate on who we are – who we were originally created to be."[169]

Mission and Purpose

When individuals have a sense of mission or purpose, it gives them a greater perspective for their life and work. Business people who have burned out "talked about gaining a sense of perspective."[170] "They add that this sense of perspective could be manifested, "by a more grounded approach to work and its place in their lives, but it could also make itself known

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[167] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 199.

[168] Albert L. Winseman, Donald O. Clifton and Curt Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community* (New York, NY: Gallup Press, 2008), 12.

[169] Albert L. Winseman, Donald O. Clifton and Curt Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community*, 10-11.

[170] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 120.

through more balanced business decision making or having a clearer sense of what's important for them."[171] This sense of mission or purpose results in a "realistic assessment of the consequences of work issues; more balanced approach to work and its place in their lives; more mature, more balanced business decision making; being clear about what's important to them in their lives and their working lives."[172]

For pastors, their sense of mission and purpose is connected with their faith and belief system. From the study of McKenna, Boyd, and Yost, "As expected, pastors were clear that their faith in God gave them strength and ability to face difficult situations..."[173] For pastors, their learning strategy had them looking to God in all circumstances. "Pastors were sure to 'look up' as well as looking to learn, looking around and looking within."[174] This "looking up" connects a pastor with a purpose or mission that is derived from God and defined by his relationship to God. "Compared to other leaders, "It is unique in that pastoral leaders identify the daily challenge of living in obedience and submission to the will of God as personal learning strategy."[175]

To help pastors identify their mission or purpose, Miner, Sterland, and Dowson provide a broad use of the concept of counseling to help the pastor in his self-awareness. They

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[171] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 120.

[172] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 123.

[173] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 199.

[174] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 199.

[175] Robert B. McKenna, Tanya N. Boyd and Paul R. Yost, "Learning Agility in Clergy: Understanding the Personal Strategies and Situational Factors That Enable Pastors to Learn from Experience," 199.

conclude, "Finally, individual counseling, fostering skills in conflict identification, negotiation, and resolution, and the clarification of ministry goals and values can all encourage a greater sense of personal autonomy and decreased reliance on congregational support for ministry legitimation."[176]

Social Networking

"Being a spiritual leader of other people creates unusual relational dynamics and expectations. One of those areas is often a lost sense of connection with others; a majority of pastors (61%) admit that they 'have few close friends.'"[177] Ministry setting has an impact on social networking for pastors, too. "Research points out the need to support small churches particularly in areas where there are proportionally few evangelicals....many rural and northern congregations would suffer from similar lack of resources and relational support."[178] Ervin Shirey, Jr. studied the use of social support systems as a means of maintaining spiritual well-being and coping with burnout. His research project "repeatedly demonstrates the significant

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[176] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," 476.

[177] Barna Group, "Pastors Feel Confident in Ministry, but Many Struggles in Their Interaction with Others," Barna Group, http://www.barna.org/leadership-articles/150-pastors-feel-confident-in-ministry-but-many-struggle-in-their-interaction-with-others (accessed November 6, 2010).

[178] Sam Reimer, "Pastoral Well-Being: Findings from Canadian Evangelical Churches Study," 12.

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role of support systems in the life of pastors for spiritual well-being and as a buffer against burnout."[179] These support systems can come from family, friends and colleagues, and mentors.

Marriage

"For clergy who are married, their spouse often plays the most significant role in terms of social support."[180] The value of the pastor's relationship with his spouse, is understood because, "many clergy in the study reported here referred to their marriage relationships as vitally important.""[181] In the study by McMinn et al, they found that 62 per cent of the pastors "spontaneously mentioned the importance of their marriage maintaining emotional and spiritual health."[182]

When a survey was conducted of pastors' wives, three key ingredients were identified for the health and wholeness of the ministry wife.[183] "These include: clear and healthy attitudes within the congregation, trusted friendships, and a solid relationship with her husband."[184] Zoba takes note of the high importance of the marriage for the pastor's wife. "Even more critical than having clear and healthy expectations from the church and good friendships is the third factor in

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[179] Ervin L. Shirey, Jr., "The Use of Support Systems by Pastors of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church s a Means of Maintaining Spiritual Well-Being and Coping with Burnout" (D. Min diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2001), 135.

[180] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 101.

[181] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 577.

[182] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 577-578.

[183] Wendy Murray Zoba, "What Pastors' Wives Wish Their Churches Knew," *Christianity Today*, April 7, 1997, 25.

[184] Wendy Murray Zoba, "What Pastors' Wives Wish Their Churches Knew," 25.

nurturing the healthy ministry wife: her relationship with her husband."[185] The conclusion of

McMinn et al. would be in agreement with the importance of her marriage relationship to the

pastor's wife, "Given the difficulty clergy and clergy spouses have in developing close

friendships outside marriage, it seems likely that marriage takes on a special significance."[186]

McMinn, et al. make this observation from their studies, "The marriage relationship is often the

sole refuge where deep emotions can be expressed, struggles at work disclosed, and

ambivalence about pastoral role discussed."[187]

Friends and Colleagues

Jeremy Haskell identifies the importance of social networking for care givers and then

notes, "clergy are unlike many care givers in that they often are unable to leave their work or

their role at the office."[188] Of the clergy he says, "They need to experience the social support

that comes through intimate and authentic relationships among equals. Clergy need to be able

to be open about their struggles and be challenged, encouraged, receive support and be held

accountable."[189] David Wood acknowledges that the strong forms of collegiality for pastors can

"have the character of friendship, in which fellow pastors share each other's lives and help share

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[185] Wendy Murray Zoba, "What Pastors' Wives Wish Their Churches Knew," 26.

[186] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 578.

[187] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," 578.

[188] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 101.

[189] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 101.

each other's character."[190] Of the value of friendship, Wood states, "Friendship sustains pastors over time and not simply during crisis – it is the kind of collegiality that is crucial to the cultivation of self-knowledge, relational intelligence, the capacity to remain dynamically engaged with one's work and the ability to identify and negotiate conflict."[191]

When Casserley and Megginson studied "high flyers' and what they learned from burnout, they also observed what they called "sharing" by those who did not burn out. In sharing, these individuals had "a willingness to share work experiences with others during high-stress periods."[192] This was "the most frequently reported behavior, and in one way the most significant in that it represented the act of reaching out and asking for others' help. This required a sense of humility and understanding of one's own limitations, rather than the grandiose illusion of invulnerability adopted by other 'high flyers.'"[193] This kind of leader "talks situations over with family and friends to get advice from those with more experience; uses this advice to put situations in perspective."[194]

Lilly Endowment's Transition into Ministry program has provided funding for several ministry projects to incorporate social networking into their ministry projects. The Bethany Fellowships has had a focus on peer support. "One of the critical learnings that has emerged

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[190] David J. Wood, "Why Pastors Leave Exit Interview," 35.

[191] David J. Wood, "Why Pastors Leave Exit Interview," 35.

[192] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

[193] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 106.

[194] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

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from the Bethany Fellowships....is the power and importance of peer support."[195] Don Schutt the director of the project said, "'We have learned that transition from seminary to congregational life is not easy...and that new pastors need as much support as possible without curtailing their freedom to fail. Working in a congregation tends to be an isolating experience, but this program helps the fellows see that they're in this together.'"[196] This gathering with fellow pastors had one pastor comment about the program as the "'most nourishing, and prayerful, and supportive group I have ever encountered....At the retreats, we realize that we have a whole network of brother and sister pastors who have been in the valleys we find ourselves in and more importantly, have found their way back to a place of wholeness."[197]

The First Parish Project is also part of the Transition into Ministry program of the Lilly Endowment. Delmer Chilton directs this program. Concerning the importance of peer support, he said, "We are trying to teach young clergy not to be lone rangers. Without peer support, they can crash and burn or make stupid mistakes....We try to teach them that wherever they are, they can be intentional and proactive about finding support."[198]

The Company of New Pastors is a program for pastors in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., funded by the Lilly Endowment and directed by Sheldon Sorge. Sorge understands that new pastors to have "ongoing discernment and renegotiating of their call, people need to talk."[199] Out of the regular gatherings of the new pastors, Sorge noted, "The group provides

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[195] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 12.
[196] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 12.
[197] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 12.
[198] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 13.
[199] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 14.

friends who can help you discern whether it's a toxic call and staying too long will kill you or whether you need to hang in there, work your way through whatever it is, and not run from it."[200]

Mentors

Mentors are another social networking relationship that is able to teach, counsel and encourage young pastors. This has been a primary component of the Transition in Ministry projects funded by the Lilly Endowment. For the Company of New Pastors program, "one of the surprising leanings from the program has been the unexpected sense of renewal among mentors."[201] Sorge said, "'We selected people who embodied the graces of fruitful, faithful ministry and been at it for awhile....So we were stunned to discover that they have found the program to be revolutionary for themselves.'"[202] This means that the mentoring of young pastors becomes a social network to build into the mentoring pastor as well.

The Residency in Ministry Program operates in Northern Indiana by the United Methodist Church. Their program, funded by the Lilly Endowment, places new clergy in 'mentoring churches'.[203] Charles Johnson the program director says they have learned that if new pastors "'can get a start in a place that is supportive and mentoring, then they are safe to

[200] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 14.
[201] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 14.
[202] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 14.
[203] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 15.

make normal mistakes as a new pastor.'"[204] Through this program it has "also resulted in learning about the importance of mentoring for new clergy."[205]

Continuing Education

According to Jeremy Haskell, "Continued education has been identified as contributing towards the prevention of both burnout and impairment."[206] The benefits of continuing education are to stay current in professional field, receive accountability both professional and personal, and benefit from personal growth and increased knowledge.[207] David Kinnamen directed a study of pastors' self perceptions for the Barna Group, and "challenged the objectivity of the pastors' perceptions pointing out discrepancies between their self-views and other research conducted by the firm.[208] To address this conflict between the pastors' perception and the condition of their congregations, Kinnamen says, "'the bottom line is that pastors need to find the tools and methods to evaluate themselves and their ministries as candidly and accurately as possible.'"[209] From a study of Australian pastors, a weak ministry orientation is an important "construct because it consistently predicts burnout and distress over and above other

[204] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 15.

[205] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 15.

[206] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 102.

[207] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 102.

[208] Barna Group, "Pastors Feel Confident in Ministry, but Many Struggles in Their Interaction with Others," 2.

[209] Barna Group, "Pastors Feel Confident in Ministry, but Many Struggles in Their Interaction with Others," 2.

key variables."[210] This ministry orientation can be changed by enhancing their sense of competence.[211] "Competence can be enhanced by continued training and professional development and by encouraging carefully designed peer supervision/peer mentoring groups that emphasize positive appraisals and gentle critical feedback."[212]

Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman have written *Preventing Ministry Failure* and identified "seven foundation stones" which "can ground us in skills to help ensure long-term effectiveness for us and ministry."[213] Two of these "foundation stones" are people skills and leadership skills. The people skills that Wilson and Hoffman want pastors to learn are personality and personality theory, active listening, reflective listening and assertiveness techniques every minister can use.[214] The leadership skills are designed to set ministers apart from the rest of the sheep.[215] These are skills of transformative leadership, dealing with change, leadership styles, love, vision, conflict resolution, and team-minded ministry.[216]

When behaviors and practices can be identified which prevent leaders from burnout, these practices become skills to be learned. For the leaders in the workplace, Casserly and

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[210] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," 475.

[211] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," 475.

[212] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," 475-476.

[213] Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2007), 26.

[214] Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers*, 190-219.

[215] Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers*, 220.

[216] Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers*, 220-250.

Megginson found that these leaders were "working smarter."[217] Working smarter entails, "well-developed organizational skills, including the ability to prioritize, delegate and work towards a clear end point rather than working long hours and sacrificing personal and social activities."[218] Some specific skills that these leaders have learned are "prioritizing and goal setting: sets small goals to the next destination and then reviews from there; takes the approach that 80% right is okay; perfection is a fantasy."[219]

The First Parish Project is "an ecumenical program of colleague support, leadership development, and spiritual growth for clergy serving their first appointment or call in a small-membership congregation.[220] For the leadership development, they explore specific topics "such as the personal life of the minister and spiritual disciplines, family system theory, pastoral identity and public role, transitioning leadership from corporate to spiritual, congregational involvement in the community or how to maintain colleague support throughout one's career.[221] This is the recognition that new pastors and young pastors need to continue in their education, learning people skills and leadership skills to be effective in ministry and to avoid burnout.

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[217] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

[218] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

[219] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

[220] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 13.

[221] Kathryn Palen, "The First Five Years: Four Programs Offering Support to New Pastors," 13.

Organizational Assessment

Burnout occurs in the workplace. It is associated with the working environment, the stresses and strains that it places on the employee. For the pastor, this is in the context of the congregation, church leaders and church dynamics. Within this volunteer organization, the pastor must deal with boundaries, balance and the church structure.

Boundaries

Diane Chandler determined that "Ministry involvement which prevents rest ranked as the second predictor for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. This finding confirms the importance of providing healthy boundaries within the context of ministry activity in order to promote positive self-care and ample opportunity for rest and renewal."[222] As pastors struggle with loneliness, they look to people in the congregation to be friends and people they are able to share their lives. A pastor was "'badly burned' when she confided church-related concerns to a member of her congregation whom she thought was a friend, only to discover too late that the person in whom she confided was not trustworthy."[223] Michael Jinkins comments, "This pastor's experience highlighted the difficulties some pastors have in negotiating appropriate pastoral boundaries."[224]

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[222] Diane Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact or Personal Renewal, Rest-Taking and Support System Practices," 168.

[223] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 6.

[224] Michael Jinkins, "Great Expectations, Sobering Realities," 6.

For pastors, setting boundaries is to determine their availability and use of their time for the congregation and for their marriage and family. The life of the church can intrude into the pastor's home with phone calls, email, texting and the internet. The pastor must learn to take responsibility for establishing boundaries to protect himself from burnout and to protect his spouse and family as well. "An important part of forming a more robust identity is taking one's share of responsibility for what happens in one's life while at the same time defining and managing clear boundaries around what one is willing to do and not do."[225] In an interview with Dr. Richard A. Swenson comments on the overcommitted and overextended life of a pastor, who by his driveness and compulsiveness "can keep a minister from saying no to anything anyone asks him to do in the church or community. That problem of saying no means it is hard for a pastor to set boundaries or limits."[226]

"Boundary setting" has a mature and realistic understanding of one's own capability; it accurately assesses workloads that you are capable of delivering; it sets clear boundaries around these workloads and only flexes these boundaries on the basis of increased time or resources.[227] Some of the practices and skills for setting boundaries include: sets clear boundaries – faces down those who try to usurp these; assesses the significance of deadlines they are given, recognizes that some are unrealistic or unnecessary; asks for more time or assistance.[228]

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[225] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 121.

[226] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 221.

[227] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

[228] Tim Casserley and David Megginson, *Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Derailment*, 107.

Balance

"Life is a balancing act and many people burn out because they have lost their equilibrium. Balance is the key to staying on top, and many lives are broken and ineffective quite simply because they have lost their center of gravity."[229]The need to establish balance is because pastors find themselves living in tension. For new pastoral couples, Dennis Cox states, "Balancing the dialectical tensions is the responsibility of the couple together."[230] This dialectic tension identifies that as a couple they are in continuous management of these opposing tensions which pulls them apart and draws them together. Cox suggests that the identity of the couple "must grow up over time through open-ended, open-minded and closed-door discussions."[231] Establishing and maintaining a balanced life involves setting limits and boundaries.[232] "It also includes working in an environment in which expectations are clearly communicated and set, alas opposed to ambiguous and ill-defined."[233]

Structure

The structure of an organization creates an environment that may be healthy or unhealthy. It may actually contribute to burnout by how things work or don't work. For

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[229] Ervin L. Shirey, Jr., "The Use of Support Systems by Pastors of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church s a Means of Maintaining Spiritual Well-Being and Coping with Burnout," 53.

[230] Dennis Cox, "Smile, Honey, Our Church Is Watching Identity and Role Conflict in the Marriage" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 2001), 210.

[231] Dennis Cox, "Smile, Honey, Our Church Is Watching Identity and Role Conflict in the Marriage" 210.

[232] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 99.

[233] Jeremy Haskell, "An Evaluation of the Recovery Program at the Evangelical Free Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania," 99.

surviving burnout, Schafer and Jacobson recommend pastors conduct an institutional values audit as a congregational wellness tool.[234] "This audit raises the self-awareness of unethical behavior for clergy, staff, and congregants, thereby heightening ethical actions and preventing corruption within the institution."[235] "Key categories which must be included in an institutional values audit are: areas of social responsibility, open communication, treatment of employees, confidentiality, respect of employees, community values, business relationships, leadership by example, human investment and ecology."[236] This identifies the policies and practices that can contribute to burnout so that the health of the ministry or organization needs to be determined. When ministry wives were surveyed concerning the ingredients needed for the healthy and wholeness of a ministry wife, it included "clear and healthy attitudes within the congregation" as the first of three ingredients.[237]

A study by The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada looked at what made a strong correlation for job satisfaction for pastors. "It appears that the pastor's view of his or her congregation's health has the greatest effect on the pastor's well-being. The financial well-being of the congregation and particularly the tendency of the congregation to burn out pastors suggest that the congregations' health is key (sic) the pastor's health."[238] To help with this assessment of church health, David Kinnamen of the Barna Group pointed out the assessments "might include personality profiles, ministry assessments, professional coaching, organizational

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[234] Arthur Gross Schafer and Steve Jacobson, "Surviving Clergy Burnout," *Encounter* 70, no. 1 (2009): 54.
[235] Arthur Gross Schafer and Steve Jacobson, "Surviving Clergy Burnout," 54.
[236] Arthur Gross Schafer and Steve Jacobson, "Surviving Clergy Burnout," 54-55.
[237] Wendy Murray Zoba, "What Pastors' Wives Wish Their Churches Knew," 25.
[238] Sam Reimer, "Pastoral Well-Being: Findings from Canadian Evangelical Churches Study," 8.

consultants, 360-degree feedback processes, and other diagnostics. This is imperative both for organizational health as well as personal effectiveness."[239]

Summary

From the literature on burnout and clergy burnout, there are five resources that will help a pastor prevent burnout and keep his tank filled: spiritual connectedness and engagement, self-awareness, social networking, continuing education, and organizational assessment.

H. B. London, Jr. and Neil Wiseman offer "real help for pastors from pastors who've been there" in their book *Pastors at Greater Risk*. They conclude their chapter on *"Help and Healing for Wounded Healers"* with the following renewal strategies for how to prevent burnout:

- Check your potential for burnout.
- Try viewing your situation from God's perspective.
- Model how to reject the world's value system.
- Always have something new in the process.
- Refuse to live at the lowest common spiritual level.
- Commit to improving ministry skills.
- Don't expect love from everyone.
- Be realistic about your use of time.
- Anticipate consequences of decisions and actions.
- Don't be surprised by evil and sin or their consequences.
- Consider a sabbatical or extended time away.[240]

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[239] Barna Group, "Pastors Feel Confident in Ministry, but Many Struggles in Their Interaction with Others," 2.

[240] H. B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, Revised ed., 213.

CHAPTER 3

THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING MINISTRY BURNOUT AND THE LIFE OF ELIJAH

The Scriptures do not use the word burnout. A working definition and description of burnout will provide a framework to examine the scriptures for ministry burnout, to assess Elijah's experience in 1 Kings 19 as ministry burnout and to determine Yahweh's recovery and prevention of ministry burnout for Elijah. "Burnout is formerly defined and subjectively experienced as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding."[1] Burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome with the three criteria of "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment."[2] Emotional exhaustion is when people "feel drained, used up and unable to unwind and recover....They lack the energy to face another project or another person."[3] It also involves "primarily feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and entrapment."[4] Depersonalization is when people feel cynical. "They take a cold, distant attitude toward work and people on the job. They minimize their involvement in work and even give up their ideals."[5] And reduced personal accomplishment is "when people feel ineffective, they feel a growing

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[1] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., (New York: Free Pr, 1988), 9.

[2] Wilmar B. Schaufeli, ed., Christina Maslach, ed. and Tadeusz Marek, ed., *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1993), 20.

[3] Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter, *The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It*, (Palo Alto: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 17.

[4] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 13.

[5] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.

sense of inadequacy. Every new project seems overwhelming....They lose confidence in themselves, others lose confidence in them."[6]

The Risks of Ministry Burnout

The Scriptures describe the ways and means that prophets, leaders, pastors and ministers can be overcome by emotional exhaustion, give up their ideals, become distant from people and their work, feel ineffective, inadequate and overwhelmed.

The Burden of Ministry

In the early days of the wilderness experience of the children of Israel, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, visited Moses, watched his ministry and gave him counsel. After watching Moses judge the people, Jethro told Moses that he would surely wear out and the people would wear out because "the task is too heavy for you" (Exod 18:18 NASB). As Moses leads the children of Israel, Jethro comes alongside to teach him and counsel him that the nature of ministry is wearing on the soul, exhausting to the leader and something too much to carry alone. If carried alone, the leader will falter and fail.

In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul provides additional insight into this burden of ministry. Paul reviews his suffering and sacrifices he has made as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul identities the

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[6] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.

dangers he has faced along with the labor hardships, sleepless nights, hunger and thirst. But even beyond all of these "external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of the concern for all the churches" (2 Cor 12:28). There is something beyond the physical and external sufferings ministers of the gospel may face. There is the daily pressure, stress and concern for the church of Jesus Christ. This can be a constant wearing down of the soul and of the leader in the church. This daily care and concern for the church comes for those who "diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction" (1 Thess 5:12). Paul states that he has learned to be "content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties for Christ's sake (2 Cor 12:10)" because he has understood that the grace of Christ "is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness (2 Cor 12:9)." The author of Hebrews understands this same burden, care and concern for the church. The leaders "keep watch over your souls as those who give an account" (Heb 13:17a). With these weighty responsibilities, the leaders of the church may do this with joy or they may lead with groaning and grief (Heb 13:17b). The burden of ministry can cause a loss of joy and create a sense of loss, grief and groaning for the leader in the church.

The Psalmist Asaph speaks with identification with this emotional loss as a leader in the Old Testament. He does not state the specific cause of his trouble, but he does cry out to God with his burden. He is overwhelmed so that his soul refuses to be comforted, he is disturbed, grows faint, troubled and concludes that this is his grief or infirmity (Ps 77:2-10). Asaph expresses through this Psalm the emotional and spiritual outcome that a leader may feel with the care and concern for God's people.

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Conflict

Conflict can cause division, trouble and a wearing down of a leader. Conflict can arise from outside the ministry or from inside the ministry. When the Gentiles, Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites opposed Nehemiah and the Israelites, this is a conflict that comes from outside the city of Jerusalem. It was prompted by their anger over the completion of the walls being rebuilt. The desired outcome from their conspired conflict was "to cause a disturbance" (Neh 4:8). With the walls completed the outside conflict continued. Through hired prophets and letters, there were constant attempts to frighten Nehemiah from fearing God and finishing his task. Paul faced similar conflicts and struggles brought from outside enemies. The Apostle Paul faced conflict that was from outside the church. Paul speaks of being afflicted, perplexed, persecuted and struck down in carrying forth the gospel (2 Cor 4:8-9). Paul faced the dangers, struggles and conflicts with robbers, Jews, Gentiles and city officials (2 Cor 11:26).

The conflicts that wear leaders down are not only from outside; leaders are worn down from conflict inside with the people of God. It is God's own people who wear down the prophet, apostle or leader. When the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt under the leadership of Nehemiah, a great outcry came from the people and their wives against their Jewish brothers (Neh 4:1). Nehemiah listened to the complaint of the people and to bring resolution he had to contend with the nobles and rulers (Neh 4:7). The early church faced a similar inside conflict. The church was growing with new disciples from Israel. A complaint came from the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebrew Jews because their widows were being overlooked

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with the serving of daily food (Acts 6:1). Like Nehemiah, the Apostles needed to consult with the congregation and one another and bring resolution to this conflict.

Conflict can also occur among leaders. As Paul and Barnabas are making plans for their second missionary journey, a debate takes place over the taking of John Mark on the trip. It is the desire of Barnabas to take John Mark; but Paul insists on not taking him. There is a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas and the outcome is "that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 15:39). This is a conflict that resulted in the separation of two leaders previously commissioned by the church of Athens and they are now going in separate and different directions.

Our Baggage and Weaknesses

The pastor's family background and upbringing may create a burden or weight for us to carry into ministry. After spending nineteen years in Egypt away from his family, Joseph is serving in Pharaoh's court and two sons were born to him. Joseph names his first-born Manasseh because "God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household" (Gen 41:51). The first seventeen years of Joseph's life had been a time of trouble and difficulty and required a time of nineteen years for the hope, healing and help to set in for him to see the fruitfulness of his life and leadership in Egypt.

The experiences of a pastor before his conversion may also create some burden or weakness or tendency toward sin that we carry into ministry. After listing a list of sinners who are not inheriting the kingdom of God, Paul continues with the words "and such were some of

you" (1 Cor 6:11). Our past may create weaknesses that become a daily or ongoing battle of the flesh. The Scriptures are filled with biblical characters that struggled with weaknesses and sin. We may look at the fear of Gideon, the manipulation and deception of Jacob, the immorality of Rahab, the timidity and shyness of Timothy, the dysfunctional family of Joseph, the legalism of Saul (Paul), the paganism of Abraham and Ruth, the racism of the Peter, the materialism of Zacchaeus, the murders by Saul (Paul), the impulsiveness of Peter, the self-will of Moses, the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar, the ambition of John, the inferiority of Joshua, the inexperience of Jeremiah and the drunkenness of Noah. All these men and women may have seen victory or failure in regard to their baggage and temperament, but for all of them and every leader there is an ongoing battle that may wear them down.

Young Men and Their Initial Calling

Young men face a special battle in the spiritual life of the church. The Apostle John writes to the little children and the fathers in the faith about knowing Him. But for the young men, John identifies a battle and victory that they will need to win. For the young men, John writes to them "because you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:13). John states again that he writes to the young men "because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). John speaks directly to young men and women that they face a great challenge and they may look for a great victory. They are facing the evil one who will be opposing them and their ministry.

The battle for young men and women in ministry is not the only thing unique for them; there is also dealing with the call of God on their life. The Scriptures record the calling of prophets and leaders who are reluctant, resistant and even disobedient. This becomes another risk of ministry. When the young Jeremiah is called and appointed as a prophet by Yahweh, he is reluctant that he could be this prophet. He responds with "I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth." (Jer 1:6). Like Jeremiah, Moses is resistant to Yahweh's call on his life that he is to be a spokesman for God. He responds to Yahweh's call by saying, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exod 4:11). Moses's reluctance to be Yahweh's spokesman results in Yahweh appointing Aaron to be Moses' spokesman for Yahweh. And there is Jonah, the disobedient prophet who is called by God to go to Nineveh. Hearing the call of Yahweh, "Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). For Jonah, there are those wonderful words of Yahweh "the second time saying" (Jonah 3:1) and this time "Jonah arose and went to Nineveh" (Jonah 3:2). The call of God on the life of a pastor or leader in the church of Jesus Christ prompts a variety of responses but creates another risk for those in leadership.

Organizational Structures

Moses judged the children of Israel from morning until night. When Jethro observed this he questioned Moses why he did this alone. He counseled him that by doing it this way he would "surely wear out both yourself and the people" (Exod 18:18). Jethro counseled Moses to select other men to judge the people also. They would be able to handle most of the disputes

and they would bring the major disputes to Moses. With this organizational change Jethro stated "it will be easier for you and they will bear *the burden* with you....then you will be able to endure, and all the people also will go to their place in peace" (Exod 18:22-23).

The organizational structure of ministry can contribute to potential burnout of pastors and leaders. The early church discovered this when they had a conflict about the care of Hellenistic widows. The solution was to divide the labor between the Apostles and seven men to serve the tables. So from the eleven Apostles being responsible for prayer, the word and serving tables, the Apostles were now responsible for the word and prayer and the seven men would serve the tables (Acts 6:1-4). It is interesting to note that when Jesus sent the disciples out for ministry, they were always sent out two by two and never sent out alone.

Fear

When God called Gideon to lead the nation of Israel, he has a constant struggle with fear. Because he is afraid of his father's household and the men of the city, he destroys the altar of Baal at night (Judg 6:27). Because Gideon is afraid, Yahweh reduces his army from 22,000 men to 300 men (Judg 6:2-8) and instructs him to go down to the Midianites camp with Purah his servant to hear about a dream describing Gideon's victory. In the Apostolic Church, fear is the motivation for a division that arose among God's people in Antioch between Jews and Gentiles. It involved a toe to toe in your face confrontation between Paul and Peter over the essence of the gospel. The text states that this conflict and Peter's disobedience was motivated by his "fearing the party of the circumcision" (Gal 2:12). Proverbs 29:15 identifies the power of

fear, "The fear of man brings a snare, / But he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted." Fear and anxiety can dishearten the leader; it can dissuade him from action; it can discourage him from trusting God; it can lead to disobedience. In the end, fear can distract the pastor or church leader so that he focuses and worries about people and things creating a snare and trap for his own walk with Christ.

People

For the leader there are different kinds of people that require different kinds of responses. In Proverbs, the wise person or sage is given different instruction for dealing with the simple, the scoffer and the fool (Prov 1:22). Paul likewise gives different instruction for dealing with different kinds of people; they are to "admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men" (1 Thess 5:14).

These different kinds of people place an ongoing demand on elders, pastors and church leaders to understand the different people in the church and speak to them appropriately. And in leading God's people, they are not always in an agreeable spirit and mood. The people of God who are not obedient or submissive to their leader create an environment that is unprofitable for the church and discouraging for the leaders (Heb 13:17). Moses faced a similar situation with the grumbling and complaining of the children of Israel in the wilderness when they saw the Egyptians prior to their crossing the Red Sea (Exod 14:11); when they were without water (Exod 15:24); when they were without meat (Exod 16:2); when they had the report of the spies from Canaan (Num 14:36); when the rebels were disciplined by God (Num 16:41). Throughout this journey, Moses was grieved and discouraged by the people of God that he was leading.

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Family

The family of a leader can put him at risk whether it is by their loss or their life. For Job, he heard a report from a servant of the destruction and loss of his oxen, sheep, donkeys and camels. And while hearing that report, another servant reported that his sons and daughters were all killed in their oldest brother's house. Job responded with tearing his robe and worshiping the Lord in his time of loss and grief. And the Scriptures record that "through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God" (Job 1:22). This suggests that pastors and leaders can be more at risk when there is death and loss in their homes. The leader is at risk of sinning and blaming God. As Job faced another attack from Satan which covered his body in boils, his wife told him "Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9). This identifies that within the family dynamic of marriage and communication, ministry couples are at risk of cursing God, being angry with God and generating conflict within the marriage and home.

Parents struggle with the raising of their children. Some parents create an environment of personal favoritism by loving one child over another which brings division between husband and wife and division between brothers and sisters. We read that "Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for game; but Rebekah loved Jacob (Gen 25:28). Jacob created this kind of division and heartache in his home by loving Joseph more than his other sons. Joseph's brothers "saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms" (Gen 37:4). This hatred for Joseph was so great that he wanted to forget all his troubles and all of his father's household (Gen 41:51).

Other couples must deal and cope with the wrong choices their children make. In these times, there is grief for both mother and father. "A wise son makes a father glad, / But a foolish son is a grief to his mother" (Prov 10:1). Solomon writes again identifying that not only is grief the outcome for a parent but also bitterness can set into the heart, "A foolish son is a grief to his father, / And bitterness to her who bore him" (Prov 17:25). A specific example of this is Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah. When Esau was forty years old he married two Hittite women. The Scriptures state that "they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah" or literally "they were a bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah" (Gen 26:35).

Words

An old English proverb states, "Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me." In the life of a leader, that is not true. It is words that cause conflicts and divisions. And it is words that cause pain and suffering. The Scriptures recognize the power of the tongue and the power of words. Proverbs highlights the power of words, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov 18:11b). Again, with the tongue, "a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov 15:1) and the perversion of the tongue "crushes the spirit" (Prov 15:4b). The writer of Proverbs informs us that one of the seven abominations to the Lord is "a false witness *who* utters lies, / And one who spreads strife among brothers" (Prov 6:19). Concerning gossips and slanders, Proverbs 20:19 provides the following warning, "He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, / Therefore do not associate with a gossip."

In James, chapter 3, teachers are reminded that "we all stumble in many ways" (Jas 3:2a), but he wants us to understand that for teachers, leaders and God's people the bridling of the tongue is impossible. "The tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell" (Jas 3:6). The pastor and leader are always faced by the ongoing damage, hurt and pain that the words of people may have on his life, home and ministry.

Sin

Elders are given specific instructions on how to shepherd the flock God by Peter. As a fellow elder he tells them that they are to shepherd and exercise oversight "not under compulsion....not for sordid gain....nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge" (1Pet 5:2-3). These words are a warning that identifies the potential sins that elders, pastors and leaders face when leading and caring for those they lead. David cries out to God about the draining impact and consequences of sin when he has not confessed his personal sin. He writes, "When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away / Through my groaning all day long. / For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; / My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer" (Ps 32:3-4). For any leader or pastor in the church of Jesus Christ, there is the ongoing risk of personal sin, the abuse of power and unconfessed personal sin that will drain and exhaust the pastor or leader and put him at risk of burnout.

Summary

Throughout the Old and New Testament, the biblical writers remind all pastors and church leaders of God's people that they are at risk of ministry burnout. They face the onslaught and daily encounters with people, circumstances and ministry structures that will cause emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. There are great reasons to expect pastors to feel drained with a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. They may expect to become cynical toward ministry, the people they serve and their family. And they may feel overwhelmed, inadequate and ineffective. From the Scriptures, every pastor faces the possibility and risk of ministry burnout.

The Burnout of Elijah

Simon DeVries introduces the Elijah narrative of 1 Kings 18:1-19:1-18 as a "prophet-authorization narrative: a marvelous story demonstrating the power of the prophet to prevail over institutional rivals, enhancing belief in prophetic authority to challenge the usurpations of Yahweh's supremacy (subtypes: word-fulfillment stories, supplicatory power stories, theophanous commission stories)."[7] DeVries also identifies 1 Kings 19:1-18 as a subgenre of the prophet-authorization narrative that "represents the theophanous commission subtype."[8] The prophetic genre describes this section of Scripture as a conflictual confrontation between Elijah,

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[7] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings*, vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, (Waco, Tex.: Word, Incorporated, 1985), 207.
[8] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings*, vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 207.

Jezebel and Yahweh with the intervention of Yahweh in the form of a theophany in the journey of Elijah to Mt Horeb and the supplicatory and humbling experience for Elijah. DeVries identifies the call of Elisha in 1 Kings 19:19-21 as the "sole representative of the prophetic call narrative."[9] The prophetic call narrative is "the story of a prophet's designation and empowerment, identifying the source of a particular prophet's charismatic gift."[10] The narrative will close establishing a new relationship for Elijah with his young protégé Elisha.

In 1 Kings 18, we have witnessed, "Elijah, with his fiery zeal, had broken the power of Baal worship, and had so far secured the acknowledgment of the authority of Jehovah over his people."[11] "Surprising, however, problems begin to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the apparent victory. Queen Jezebel reacts with fury, vowing revenge (1 Kgs 19,1-2). Elijah, previously confident, fearless, and seemingly untouchable suddenly appears panic, fleeing for his life (1 Kgs 19,3). Now far removed from the scene of triumph and the spectacular vindication of his cause, the prophet seems overcome by a sense of dejection."[12]

Terrence Frethem notes that "this chapter has long captured the imagination of biblical interpreters, especially the 'still small voice.'"[13] This chapter moves from Mt. Carmel to Mt. Horeb and the focus is not around the prophet Elijah. "Rather, in the face of the threat posed by Jezebel, coupled with Elijah's despondent response, the chapter centers upon a direct encounter with God who refuses to let him off the hook regarding his calling and renews the

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[9] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings, vol. 12 of Word Biblical Commentary*, 207.

[10] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings,* vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 206.

[11] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. 3, (original edition publication year unknown; repr., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 233.

[12] Sigve Tonstad, "The Limits of Power: Revisiting Elijah at Horeb," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 19, no. 2 (2005): 254.

[13] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 108.

prophetic commission (vv.15-18), which Elijah fulfills in part (vv.19-21).[14] Frethheim is

acknowledging that Elijah is despondent to his calling and prophetic mission but it is the

intervention of Yahweh into the life of Elijah that brings him back to his calling and commission

as a prophet of God. God "would refine and strengthen him (*Elijah*) for the further fulfillment of

his calling."[15] Through the care, conversation and commissioning of God, Elijah is restored and

recommissioned as a prophet who has been through a period of despair, discouragement and

burnout.

Emotional Exhaustion

1 Kings 19 presents an Elijah who is emotionally drained. He lacks the energy to face

people or another project; he feels helpless, hopeless and even trapped in his escape from

Jezebel. The passage just breathes emotional exhaustion. It is not surprising that Elijah is

physically exhausted. Whether it is the same day or the next day when Jezebel threatens Elijah,

Elijah had been up all day with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. In that time, he repaired

and built an altar; dug a trench, arranged the wood, butchered an ox and placed it on the altar.

Unlike the prophets of Baal, the text states that "they", the prophets of Baal, did this together (1

Kgs 18:26) and that "he", Elijah, did it alone (1 Kgs 18:32-33).

During this time, Elijah is engaged in the emotional and spiritual endeavors and conflicts

of this challenge. Around noon, Elijah mocked the prophets and told them to call out to their

god. After preparing his offering for the sacrifice and dousing it in water, he prayed to Yahweh

and fire came from heaven and consumed his sacrifice. With the people responding to this

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[14] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings, 108.*

[15] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes,* 3:252.

miracle and crying out "The Lord; He is God" (1 Kgs 18:39), Elijah gives instruction and direction

to these new followers. After which, he killed the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. This

would not be a quiet task. This would be one of physical, emotional and spiritual exhaustion.

But Elijah is not finished yet. He prays to Yahweh on Mt. Carmel making seven requests of God

for it to rain. Finally when his servant reports a cloud about the size of a man's hand coming

from the Sea, Elijah knows his prayer has been answered. He warns King Ahab of the storm

coming so that he can leave in his chariot. Then "the hand of the Lord was on Elijah and

he....outran Ahab to Jezreel" (1 Kgs 18:46). He outran him in a twenty mile race.

It is this emotional exhaustion that contributes to Elijah's response to Jezebel's threat.

After hearing from King Ahab all that Elijah had done, Jezebel sends a message to Elijah that

threatens that his life will be taken the next day (1 Kgs 19:2). It should be noted that Jezebel

could have sent her army to kill Elijah but she only sent a message. It was the word of Jezebel

that caused Elijah to see the writing on the wall or cause him to be afraid,[16] but he responded by

running.

After running about one hundred and twenty miles to Beersheba and then a day's

journey into the wilderness, Elijah collapses under a broom tree and requests that he may die.

An angel the first time, and then the angel of the Lord the second time provided food and drink

for Elijah. The Lord provided enough provisions for him that he was able to travel the next forty

days and nights to Mt. Horeb. It would appear that it is only because of the Lord's care and

provision that Elijah's emotional exhaustion is addressed.

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[16] The NASB footnote for "was afraid" is "reading of many mss.: Heb. text may read *saw*. "First Kings 19:3 does not say that Elijah 'fears' but that he "sees" (aryw)))." Peter J. Leithart, *1 and 2 Kings* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2006), 14.

Depersonalization

It is possible to see Elijah's depersonalization as he feels cynical, taking a cold and distant attitude toward people and his work even to the point of giving up on his own involvement and his ideals. Even before Elijah heard the threat from Queen Jezebel, Elijah had distanced himself from other prophets of his day. Obadiah met up with Elijah before the Mt Carmel event and told Elijah that he had hidden one hundred prophets in caves and provided them with bread and water after Jezebel had killed the prophets of the Lord (1 Kgs 18:13). Following the consuming of Elijah's offering and the altar by Yahweh, the people fell on their faces claiming "The Lord, He is God; the Lord He is God" (1 Kgs 18:39) and then they chased and captured the Baal prophets and brought them to the brook of Kishon for Elijah to kill them (1Kgs 18:40). When Elijah heard the threat from Jezebel, he ran away from those who had responded to the Lord as God and helped with the killing of the prophets of Baal. Finally as Elijah ran from Jezebel, he traveled to the most southern part of the southern Kingdom, Beersheba, and left his servant there and then traveled one more day's journey into the wilderness (1 Kgs 19:3-4). On this escape by Elijah, Robert Hubbard, Jr. states, "Elijah's flight was more than an attempt to escape Jezebel's wrath; rather, he was bent on abandoning his prophetic office."[17]

After Elijah travelled forty days and nights and about two hundred and fifty miles to Mt Horeb (also known as Mt Sinai), the word of the Lord came to Elijah, "What are you doing here, Elijah" (1 Kgs 19:9)? Elijah's distancing himself from all other followers of the Lord and even distancing himself from the Lord, responds, "I alone am left" (1Kgs 19:10). After the Lord instructs Elijah to stand on the mountain before the Lord and then reveals Himself in a gentle

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[17] Robert L. Hubbard, *First and Second Kings* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1991), 100.

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blowing of the wind, the Lord asks Elijah again, "What are you doing here. Elijah?" (1 Kgs 19:13). And again Elijah says, "And I alone *am* left." (1 Kgs 19:14). Elijah has become so cynical and so distant from God's people, His prophets and his servant that Elijah is unable to respond differently even when the word and voice of God speaks to him. Donald Wiseman summarizes Elijah as exhibiting "symptoms of manic depression, wishing for death, together with the loss of appetite, an inability to manage and with excessive self-pity. He is unmoved by visitors, even by a visit from God and visions."[18] Elijah, the prophet of God, the miracle worker in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, has experienced such a deep depersonalization that he has become distant from his Lord.

Reduced Personal Accomplishment

Elijah has demonstrated anything but a reduced personal accomplishment throughout his ministry. He has prayed for the rain to stop and it did. He has been fed by ravens at the brook of Cherith. He increased the oil and flour for the widow and her son in Zarephath. He raised the widow's son from death. He called fire from heaven to consume his sacrifice. He killed four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. He prayed for it to rain after three and a half years of drought, and it did. And he outran King Ahab who was riding in a chariot to Jezreel, which was twenty miles away. Yet when we read in 1 Kings 19, this Elijah feels ineffective, feels inadequate, feels overwhelmed with a loss of confidence in His God and himself. August Konkel comments on Elijah's sense of reduced personal accomplishment, "He ignores the dramatic conversion of the people (18:39), forgets the courageous faithfulness of the prophet Obadiah

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[18] Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: an Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill., U.S.A.: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 171.

(18:3-4), blames the people for the vengeful attack of Jezebel (19:10, 14), and regards himself as utterly isolated in his struggle against the Baal cult."[19]

When Elijah arrives in the wilderness, about one hundred and twenty miles from Jezreel and alone, Elijah requests of Yahweh, "Take my life, for I am not better than my fathers." (1 Kgs 19:4) In his request, he makes a comparison of himself to his fathers. His conclusion is that he is not better. He identifies that he is inadequate, ineffective, and one who has lost his sense of accomplishment and confidence.

After traveling to Mt Horeb under the care and provision of God, the Lord speaks, asking him what he is doing here. Elijah's answer to Yahweh highlights his sense of reduced personal accomplishment. Elijah identifies that he has been "very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts" (1 Kgs 19:10). But in spite of Elijah's zealousness and service to YHWH, the sons of Israel "have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars and killed your prophets with the sword....and they seek my life to take it away" (1 Kgs 19:10). Elijah dismisses all the people who responded to the miracle on Mt. Carmel and helped capture the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. In fact, Elijah has dismissed the help of these people to his ministry and included them in the work of Jezebel. It is only Jezebel that had threatened Elijah, but now he tells Yahweh that it is the "sons of Israel." Even after, Yahweh speaks to Elijah on Mt Horeb in the gentle blowing; Elijah responds the same way again when God asks him the same question. Elijah tells God again that he has been zealous but the sons of Israel have forsaken the covenant, torn down His altars, killed His prophets and now seek his life (1 Kgs 19:14). Elijah is so spent emotionally, physically

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[19] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006), 302.

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and spiritually that he is unable to recall any of the workings of God through him and for the nation of Israel. He has such a reduced sense of personal accomplishment that he cannot even see God's personal accomplishment in his life of sustaining him under the juniper tree, providing for him forty days and nights in the wilderness or His speaking to him on Mt. Horeb.

Conclusion of Elijah's Burnout

James, the leader of the church of Jerusalem, writes a letter to the twelve tribes dispersed abroad and refers to Elijah in his final chapter. He instructs the believers to confess our sins to one another and to pray for one another (Jas 5:16). He then concludes his letter by instructing the believers to turn a brother back who is straying from the truth so that their sins may be forgiven (Jas 5:19-20). And between these instructions, James introduces us to Elijah who "was a man with a nature like ours" (Jas 5:17a) and he prayed for it not to rain and it stopped; and after three and half years prayed for it to rain, and it did. James is reminding us of the kind of person that God uses and renews for ministry. God uses those who have seen the wonderful miracles of God through their ministry and life and even that same person who has also experienced the difficult and dark days of ministry burnout. God uses those who have experienced emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. God uses those who have been burned out.

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"The solutions usually offered for clergy burnout are valid enough in their own rights: to maintain a balance in one's life, to stay healthy, to be quiet each day, to have a hobby, etc."[20] George Sumner adds to this thought by stating, "But if the problem is a sense of meaninglessness in the clergy role itself, then these answers are patently insufficient."[21] Elijah does not find himself pursuing some list of spiritual disciplines or some wholeness concept of ministry. Iain Provan observes, "Elijah apparently retreats....of his own volition....he forgets to think theologically and simply reacts (for the first time) to circumstances."[22] Elijah's renewal and recommissioning comes from the direct intervention of Yahweh. Yahweh provides the rest and renewal that Elijah needs, reconnects with him spiritually, realigns him with his calling and establishes a relational ministry and friendship with Elisha.

Yahweh Provides Rest and Renewal for Elijah – 1 Kings 19:4-8

Elijah has run for his life from Jezebel in Israel, ran to Beersheba in Judah, left his servant in Beersheba, travels a one day's journey into the wilderness, sits under a broom tree and requests that he may die. He cries out to God, "'It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.'" (1 Kgs 19:4b). And Elijah finds himself alone. There is a high cost and risk when the prophet creates this situation of aloneness and loneliness. "Loneliness is one of the worst of all psychological wounds. We humans are social creatures in every possible

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[20] George R. Sumner, *Being Salt: A Theology of an Ordered Church* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2007), 96.
[21] George R. Sumner, *Being Salt: A Theology of an Ordered Church*, 96.
[22] Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 144.

way. Isolation is one of the worst of punishmets because of our socially dependent nature."[23]

And Elijah may have felt as Guy Greenfield has observed ministers under attack feel, "Standing alone against pathological antagonists without strong support and defense from supposedly godly lay leaders makes one feel betrayed."[24]

Elijah is the leader who has become "a casualty of a struggle that is as old as humanity – the drowning out of eternity by the screams of temporal concerns."[25] "Alone in the desert, Elijah desires nothing more than death."[26] "Thus far Elijah has been responding only to Jezebel's 'messenger' (Hb. *malþāk*, v.2)...Now it is God's turn to take the initiative with a messenger of his own (Hb. *mal' āk*, vv. 5, 7; the NIV's **angel**).[27] Elijah is "alone and seemingly deserted in this desert wasteland, the very symbol of a wasted life. Yet God would tenderly nourish and lead his prophet to a place where he would get some much needed instruction."[28] "God responded to Elijah's emotional state, but didn't rebuke, chastise, or punish. In fact, *God allowed Elijah to sleep first.*"[29] "Yahweh intervenes at the critical moment. The 'angel of the Lord,' the agent of divine presence, appears, as he did to Moses when he fled to Midian from the threats of Pharaoh in his journey toward Horeb (Exod 3:2)."[30]

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[23] Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 64.

[24] Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks*, 65.

[25] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 138.

[26] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings*, 302.

[27] Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 144.

[28] R.D. Patterson, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 4 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 149.

[29] Daniel Spaite with Debbie Salter Goodwin, *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Beacon Hill Press, 1999), 151.

[30] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings*, 302.

When Elijah is nourished by the food and water from the angel of the Lord, he journeys

to Mt. Horeb, a trip of about two hundred miles. This journey should have taken Elijah ten to

twelve days to complete; however it took him forty days and forty nights. "The journey of forty

days and forty nights recalls the time spent by Moses at Mount Sinai receiving the revelation of

Yahweh's Torah (Exod 24:18: 34:28)."[31] For this forty days and nights, "It may, therefore, be

thought to imply an interval of retirement for rest and solitary meditation....during which the

spirit of the prophet might be calmed from the alternations of triumph and despondency, to

receive the spiritual lesson which awaited him."[32]John Lange comments on this forty day and

night journey stating, "It was a season of preparation for the highest revelation of God and a

higher world, of contemplation and prayer."[33] This forty days and nights in the desert

wilderness was so that Elijah "might know that the Lord was still the same God who had

nourished and sustained the whole nation in the desert with manna from heaven for forty

years."[34] C.F. Keil understands the purpose of these days and nights in the desert was for "the

strength of Elijah's faith to be tried by the forty days' wandering in the same desert, and to be

purified from all carnal zeal for the further fulfillment of His calling, in accordance with the

divine will."[35] "This wilderness experience restored Elijah's faith in God, God was still there, as

powerful and loving as ever. Elijah could still trust Him....because he was still important to

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[31] Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings: a Commentary* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 231.

[32] Alfred Barry, *1Kings – Esther,* vol. 3 *of The Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, No Date Listed), 84.

[33] John Peter Lange, *Commentary on The Holy Scriptures Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical: Kings* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1872), 224.

[34] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes,* 3:255.

[35] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes,* 3:255.

God."[36] Roger Elsworth observes three ways that Yahweh intervened into Elijah's life for this time of rest and renewal. First, God fed Elijah. Second, God reminded Elijah of His past faithfulness and mercy. And finally, God prepared Elijah for stillness.[37]

The importance of rest and renewal for the prophet, minister or pastor to prevent burnout is demonstrated by Yahweh's intervention into the unintentional life of Elijah. However, it is important to note the intentionality of Jesus Christ in his ministry with his disciples. "Jesus practiced a healthy approach to time and vocation in his role as his disciple's mentor, teacher, and spiritual guide."[38] Jesus had sent his disciples on their first ministry trip. They were sent out in pairs. They preached that men should repent; they cast out many demons; they anointed many sick with oil; and they healed many of them (Mark 6:7, 12-13). When they returned from their trip, "The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught" (Mark 6:30). Jesus listened and interacted with his disciples and then, "Jesus invites them to on a retreat with him."[39] "'Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.' (For there were many *people* coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) " (Mark 6:31). As Bruce and Katherine Epperly comment, "Near burnout, Jesus' disciples needed a time to pause in God's presence,"[40] so "they went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves" (Mark 6:32). The crowds follow Jesus and the disciples on their retreat and again, Jesus found himself engaged in ministry and finally feeding five thousand men (Mark 6:44). Jesus sent his disciples away in a boat on the sea; He bid farewell to the people;

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[36]Russell H. Dilday, *The Communicator's Commentary 1, 2 Kings.* (Waco, Tex.: W Pub Group, 1987), 220.

[37] Roger Ellsworth, *Standing For God: The Story of Elijah* (Waco, Tex.: Banner of Truth, 1994), 86-89.

[38] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout* (Waco, Tex.: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 85.

[39] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout*, 85.

[40] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout*, 85.

and "He departed to the mountain to pray....and He was alone on the land" (Mark 6:46-47). And

on a personal and intentional practice, Jesus found time for rest and renewal from the strain

and drain of ministry.

Yahweh Reconnects Elijah Spiritually – 1 Kings 19:9-14

Elijah retreats "to Mt. Horeb (Sinai). There the prophet met Yahweh face-to-face at the

very site where Moses had met him six hundred years before. The meaning clearly is that the

God of covenant promise was still there to meet his people and to bless them as they met the

conditions of faith and obedience."[41] John Lange comments, "Horeb is the place of the loftiest

and weightiest revelations for Israel (Deut. i.6; iv. 10-15; v.2; 1 Kings viii. 9; Mal.iv.4)."[42] R. D.

Patterson adds, "*The cave* (as Heb.) may well have been the specific 'clift of the rocks' where

God appeared to Moses (AV, Ex. 33:22) rather than the 'cave-region' generally"[43] Lange would

agree that most commentators hold to this interpretation and would add that "this view is

favored also by the definite article."[44]

"The theophany is introduced by *the word of the Lord came*, a constant and dominant

aspect of the inspiration of Elijah's works."[45] Elijah had run when he heard the word of Jezebel,

but now he hears "the word of the Lord," and Yahweh asks, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

(1 Kgs 19:9) Elijah responds that he has been very zealous for the Lord and that the sons of

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[41] Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: a History of Old Testament Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 362.

[42] John Peter Lange, *Commentary on The Holy Scriptures Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical: Kings*, 219.

[43] R.D. Patterson, 1, 2 Kings, vol. 4 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, 149.

[44] John Peter Lange, *Commentary on The Holy Scriptures Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical: Kings*, 219.

[45] Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: an Introduction and Commentary*, 172.

Israel had forsaken the covenant, torn down God's altars and killed the prophets of God. He concludes his response with "I alone am left; and they seek my life to take it away." (1 Kgs 19:10) For Elijah, "it is not Jezebel who is his opponent, but *the Israelites*."[46]

By Elijah answering Yahweh, Konkel concludes, "Elijah's answer to the question shows that he is a prophet worthy of encountering Yahweh at his mountain (v.11 a); his function as a prophet is restored."[47] God tells Elijah, "Go forth, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." (1Kgs 19:11) The theophany of God will not confront Elijah. Donald Wiseman comments on this encounter between Yahweh and Elijah, "The upheaval of nature in powerful winds, earthquakes, floods or storms is associated with God's actions in revelation and judgment. It is reminiscent of the covenant at Sinai and the commissioning of Moses and the people (Ex. 19:9, 16; 34:6; Dt. 5:23-26)."[48] The scriptures add, "And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing" (1 Kgs 19:11b-12). This is "the central epiphany, Yahweh's 'passing by'....the elaborate, stately, measured cadence of natural upheaval as Yahweh himself appears."[49] "Fire and storm were characteristic ways for God to manifest himself, as in the challenge to the prophets of Baal: Fire (sic) consumed the offering, fierce rain descended on the

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[46] John W. Olley, "YHWH and His Zealous Prophet: The Presentation of Elijah in 1 and 2 Kings," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 80 (1998): 40.

[47] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings*, 303.

[48] Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: an Introduction and Commentary*, 173.

[49] Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: with an Introduction to Historical Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 199.

mountain."[50] The Hebrew text drives home Yahweh's message. "Here the language is descriptive: a string of participial and nominal clauses, repeating for sonorous effect three key words, wind, earthquake, fire, and a refrain, 'The Lord is not in the (wind, earthquake, fire).' The Hebrew is succinct and forceful."[51] God's "command is not immediately obeyed (see v.13), because of an ear-splitting, multimedia 'interruption' (vv.11b-12).[52] "After the noisy demonstration there is only a 'sound of sheer silence,' an absence of sound, but palpable after all the noise."[53] Terrance Fretheim states, "The Hb. is lit. 'a voice/sound, a barely audible whisper.'"[54] Donald Wiseman explains the gentle blowing or whisper of God as "the soft voice of God speaking to the conscience, illuminating the mind and stirring the resolve in individual and nation may follow and is often preferable to the loud roaring and thunder of cosmic events at Sinai and Carmel."[55] Frethem comments, "God *now* stands before the emergent Elijah, a presence he acknowledges by hiding his face (see Exod. 3:6; 34:8). God has appeared directly for the sake of moving Elijah beyond his despondency and refusal to continue his commission."[56]

When Elijah is asked by Yahweh again, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kgs 19:13), Elijah responds in the exact same way he did the first time God asked him this question, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kgs 19:14). Elijah's repeated complaint that he alone is

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[50] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings*, 303.

[51] Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: with an Introduction to Historical Literature*, 199.

[52] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings,* 109.

[53] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings,* 109.

[54] Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 149.

[55] Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: an Introduction and Commentary*, 173.

[56] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings,* 109.

left "is an implicit confession that no strength for ministry remains in him and must therefore come from God himself."[57] Elijah "should have reconsidered his words, especially since God really knew what he was doing in Horeb, knew that he had commanded him there when he had been sheltered beneath broom tree in the desert."[58] Yahweh still has work for Elijah to do so at Mount Horeb "he reimpowers (sic) him to mighty deeds by showing him that he is present not only in the 'earthquake' and 'fires' and 'winds' that have heretofore supported Elijah's labors but also in so still a silence of God's apparent absence as to seem no more than a quiet murmur."[59]

From Elijah's words it seems that nothing has changed for Elijah, he appear still distant from Yahweh and his calling. However, Brian Britt makes the following observation concerning Elijah's cloak, "As for the cloak, it covers the prophet during the theophany, but it also represents the prophetic office: it becomes a token of Elisha's commission immediately afterward (cf. Exodus 4) and in the miraculous ascent of Elijah in 2 Kings, where the mantle parts the waters; hence, the garment serves to conceal and to reveal."[60] Volkmar Fritz understands that Elijah has learned something about Yahweh through the theophany. He states,

> Elijah recognizes the presence of Yahweh only in the hardly audible murmur....and thus mediates a new image of God....One can experience God only in the silence that focuses the individual on himself or herself and on the act of listening; the silence is appropriate to the nature of God and to the experience of God through his word. God reveals himself mysteriously.[61]

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[57] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings,* vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 236.

[58] Frieda Clark Hyman, "Elijah: Accuser and Defender," *Judaism* 30, no. 3 (1990): 287.

[59] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings,* vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 237.

[60] Brian Britt, "Prophetic Concealment in a Biblical Type Scene," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64 (2002): 49.

[61] Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings: a Continental Commentary*, 1st English language ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 2003), 198.

It is Yahweh who reengages Elijah spiritually. It is Yahweh who makes the spiritual

reconnection for Elijah. And Yahweh does this for Elijah, personally (1 Kgs 19:11a), individually

(1 Kgs 19:11a), privately (1 Kgs 19:11b), quietly (1 Kgs 19:12), and directly (1 Kgs 19:13-17).

Yahweh Realigns Elijah with His Calling – 1 Kings 19:15-17

Yahweh's intervention into Elijah's life has been to "refine and strengthen him for

further fulfillment of his calling."[62] And through the gentle whisper of Yahweh, He has "revealed

the Lord to him as a merciful and gracious God, long-suffering and of great goodness and

truth."[63] Elijah now "hears a new commission which suggests that he cannot simply flee his

prophetic calling ....he is to be part of the eventual end to this ideological conflict between

Yahweh and Baal, Elijah and the Baal prophets, apostate people and the Jezebel-Ahab

partnership."[64]

> The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and
> when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of
> Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah
> you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall come about, the one who escapes
> from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the
> sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. (1 Kgs 19:15-17)

Elijah's interactions with Yahweh and conversations have been "preparatory to a

renewed commission directly from God....Elijah's commission is enfleshed with some new

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[62] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, 3:252.

[63] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, 3:259.

[64] Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: with an Introduction to Historical Literature*, 200.

particulars and the promise of help to carry out his responsibilities."[65] It should also be

remembered that "Elijah exhibited symptoms of manic depression, wishing for death, together

with a loss of appetite, an inability to manage and with excessive self-pity. He was unmoved

....even by a visit from God and visions, but was restored when given a new and demanding task

to fulfill."[66] T. R. Hobbs states clearly what has happened concerning Elijah's prophetic task, "He

is, in effect, recommissioned."[67]

   With this recomissioning, "God refused to relieve Elijah of his prophetic

calling....Instead, God assigned him with designating the three key players in God's reply to

Israel's apostasy."[68] This is a "new task for the dispirited prophet. The Lord's command (*said)*

involved a return to the scene of action."[69] Yahweh is giving new instructions and commands to

Elijah. "Elijah must reverse his retreat, returning to the land of ministry and there accomplishing

mighty acts of prophetic power, anointing Hazael (cf. 2 Kgs 8:7-15), Jehu (cf. 2 Kgs 9:1-13), and

Elisha (1 Kgs 19:19-21)."[70] Elijah is given "these three tasks to over throw Ahab's house: Elijah is

to anoint Hazael (a Gentile) and Jehu (an Israelite) as the two swords of Yahweh and Elisha as a

prophet."[71] R. D. Patterson expands on the three tasks of Elijah. He states that

> Elijah still had work to accomplish for God. That task was threefold: (1) in the realm of
> international politics, he was to anoint Hazael to succeed Ben-Hadad, Israel's perennial
> adversary in Damascus; (2) in national affairs, Jehu was to be anointed as the next king

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[65] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings,* 110.

[66] Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: an Introduction and Commentary*, 171.

[67] T.R. Hobbs, *1, 2 Kings* (Dallas: Word Pub Group, 1989), 37.

[68] Robert L. Hubbard, *First and Second Kings*, 101.

[69] Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: an Introduction and Commentary*, 173.

[70] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings,* vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 236.

[71] Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings:Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Brazos Press: Grand Rapids,
2006), 142.

(v.16); and (3) in the spiritual realm, Elisha was to be commissioned as his own successor (cf. God's instruction to Moses in Num 27:18-23).[72]

If Elijah had feared his failure as a prophet or that the nation of Israel would be at risk with no successor, Mt. Horeb not only realigned Elijah with his calling, but also clarified Yahweh's future prophetic ministry for Israel. On Horeb, Elijah learned, "that Jehovah had appointed as prophet one who would step into his place and carry on his work, so that there should never be in Israel a lack of such as do not bow the knee to Baal."[73] "The anointing of Elisha assures Elijah that the prophetic challenge will not end with him."[74]

Reggie McNeal observes that the role of a calling has an impact in the pastor's life, "Every spiritual leader operates with some decision-making matrix. The most effective learn to say no sometimes when others push them to say yes. They are willing to order their lives around their calling."[75] Guy Greenfield had noted that to recover one's faith and confidence in God, "a wounded minister needs desperately to listen again to his call to ministry."[76] Greenfield also understands that like Elijah pastors need to be reminded that "If your call was valid and real in the beginning, it is still valid and real today. It may simply need reworking, redirecting, and renewal."[77] Like Elijah, those times alone with God give "us a holy time for actually discovering as well as embracing more thoroughly our calling in life."[78] When pastors and leaders are not clear on their calling and lose the intentionality of their life, "they dissipate their energies in lots

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[72] R.D. Patterson, *1, 2 Kings,* vol. 4 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, 151

[73] John Peter Lange, *Commentary on The Holy Scriptures Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical: Kings*, 226.

[74] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings*, 304.

[75] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 60.

[76] Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks*, 199.

[77] Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks*, 201.

[78] Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 132.

of activity that does not further the missional agenda of their call from God."[79] Elijah's

realignment to his calling reminds us that the pastor or leader who wants to avoid burnout "has

to keep a clear view of the future that will come about only by being faithful to the Father's

call."[80]

Yahweh Establishes New Relationships for Elijah – 1 Kings 19:18-21

After Yahweh realigns Elijah with his calling by giving him the direct commands to anoint

Hazael, Jehu and Elisha, he then addresses Elijah's repeated complaint "I alone am left."

Yahweh informs Elijah, "Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal

and every mouth that has not kissed him." (1 Kgs 19:18) Alfred Barry understands these words

from Yahweh as an indirect rebuke by this "revelation of the faithful remnant – the seven

thousand who had not bowed to Baal – unknown to him, perhaps to one another, but known

and loved by God."[81] Patterson identifies another purpose for these words from Yahweh, "To

encourage his restored prophet further, God set the record straight: there were yet seven

thousand true believers in Israel."[82]

However, for Elijah there was one true believer in Israel who will follow Elijah and

minister to him so that he knows that he is not alone, Elisha. As Elijah leaves Mt. Horeb, the

scriptures describe his finding and call of Elisha.

> [1]So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing
> with twelve pairs *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to
> him and threw his mantle on him. He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Please

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[79] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 60.

[80] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 60.

[81] Alfred Barry, *1Kings – Esther*, vol. 3 of *The Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 85.

[82] R.D. Patterson, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 4 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, 151.

let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what I have done to you?" So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave *it* to the people and they ate. (1 Kgs 19:19-21a)

"Since the key figure in Elijah's threefold commission was Elisha, Elijah sought him out first. He found Elisha busily engaged in plowing."[83] "Elisha (meaning 'God is my salvation') is in charge of twelve pairs of oxen ploughing (sic) in succession, he being the twelfth."[84] "That Elisha is called while plowing with twelve yoke of oxen shows he is a very wealthy man. Nevertheless, when called he leaps at his opportunity. He leaves his source of income, abandons his parents with a kiss, and ironically, when Elijah tells him to go back, he burns his bridges so he can't go back."[85] Simon DeVries identifies the purpose of the slaughtering of his oxen and the chopping up of their yoke as Elisha making "a sacrificial feast dedicating himself to the prophetic ministry. The fellow-villagers who share the feast with him are witnesses to his ordination."[86] Elisha "gave up a very stable and secure life to serve Elijah."[87] Bruce Waltke comments, "Here is the kind of disciple - one who counts the cost and commits himself without reservation – Jesus is looking for (see Mark 1:16-20; 2:14; 8:24-38)."[88]

Following Elisha's calling and saying farewell to his family and friends, his new relationship with Elijah is identified, "Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him." (1 Kgs 19:21b) This new relationship is a change for Elisha, "Henceforth from a master he

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[83] R.D. Patterson, *1, 2 Kings,* vol. 4 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary,* 151.

[84] August H. Konkel, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Kings,* 304.

[85] Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: an Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 719-720.

[86] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings,* vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary,* 239.

[87] Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings: a Commentary,* 233.

[88] Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: an Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach,* 720.

became a servant, ministering to Elijah, and willing to be known, even when he became a

prophet himself as 'he that poured water on the hands of Elijah' (2 Kings iii. 11)."[89] The verb for

Elisha's role with Elijah, "ministered to him" is the Hebrew verb *shārat* which means "minister,

serve." "The use of *shārat* falls into two natural categories: 1) of personal service rendered to an

important personage, usually a ruler, and 2) of ministry worship on the part of those who stand

in a special relationship to God as the priests."[90] Mark Sweeney summarizes the use of *shārat* as

> typically employed in relation to priestly service (e.g. Exod 28:35; Num 3:6; 1 Kgs 8:11),
> although it may also be used in relation to royal officers (1 Chr 27:1; Esth 1:10), royal
> domestic service (Gen 39:4; 2 Sam 13:7), the service of angels to YHWH (Ps 103),and to
> Joshua's service to Moses (Exod 24:13; 33:11; Num 11:28). Just as Moses has Joshua as
> his assistant and successor, Elijah has Elisha as his assistant and successor.[91]

Commentators understand Elijah and Elisha's new relationship through the lens of their

ten years of ministry together. It began as a formal relationship designated by Yahweh but it

was molded into a friendship over the years. In this initial relationship, Simon Devries,

understands that Elisha becomes "Elijah's apprentice until the end."[92] Elisha will be trained,

equipped, mentored and discipled by Elijah so that he can learn how to be a prophet. C. F. Keil

understands that Elisha "followed Elijah as his servant *i.e.* his assistant." Elisha served Elijah by

assisting him with the tasks or assignments that were given to him. Elijah delegated

responsibilities and tasks to his assistant, Elisha. T. R Hobbs looks at the relationship of Elijah

and Elisha from its beginning and its end:

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[89] Alfred Barry, *1Kings – Esther,* vol. 3 *of the Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 86.

[90] R. Laird Harris et al., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* vol.2 (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 958.

[91] Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings: a Commentary*, 233-234.

[92] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings*, vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 239.

The relationship of the two prophets is fascinating. At one point Elisha is referred to as the one 'who poured water on the hands of Elijah' (2 Kgs 3:11), and at another point as one who 'ministered' to Elijah (1 Kgs 19:21). Both of these references point to a close relationship of master and servant or teacher and disciple, although little of this is given any form in the rest of the stories. The close relationship is reflected in the story of the departure of Elijah 2 Kgs 2, when Elisha alone is allowed to cross the Jordan and witness the departure, whereas the followers, the 'sons of the prophets,' stand at a distance.[93]

Phillip Keller sees this close relationship in terms of friendship. He notes that "Elisha would prove to be the finest protégé any prophet was ever privileged to have in his company. From now on Elijah the veteran and Elisha the trainee would be inseparable friends."[94] Arthur Pink observes that through the relationship of Elijah and Elisha that there is an affection that bound them together. He states

> There is reason to believe that Elisha accompanied Elijah during the last ten years of his earthly life, and during these closing scenes we are shown how closely they were knit together and how strong was the love of the younger man to his master....Nothing could deter Elisha from spending the final hours in the immediate presence of the one who had won his heart....But when it was necessary, Elisha cried "My father, my father" (a term of endearment), and in token of his deep grief 'took hold of his clothes and rent them in two pieces.[95]

For Elijah, Yahweh had provided not only a replacement for his prophetic office, but had provided a servant, apprentice, friend and son. Elijah would not be ministering alone to the nation of Israel but in step with a friend and a colleague. What Yahweh had provided for Elijah is a pattern found throughout the scriptures. Those called of God are not to minister alone but are to develop ministry relationships and friends. The friendships and ministry relationships from the Old Testament are: there is Moses and Joshua, Jonathan and David, Isaiah and Hezekiah,

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[93] T.R. Hobbs, *1, 2 Kings*, 35-36.

[94] W. Phillip Keller, *Elijah, Prophet of Power* (Chicago: Word Books, 1980), 134.

[95] Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings from Elisha: His Life and Miracles.* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 15-16.

Jeremiah and Josiah, and Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. The New Testament

provides additional examples of ministry relationship and friendships: Paul and Barnabas, Paul

and Silas, Timothy, Titus, and Luke, Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos, Jesus and Peter, James and

John, Jesus and Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and Jesus and the twelve disciples. Jesus practiced

the priority of friendship and ministry relationships when he sent the disciples out in pairs (Mark

6:7). And the early church followed this pattern of Jesus when the leaders in Antioch sent out

their first missionaries; they sent them out in pairs, Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2-3).

Pastors face the same challenge of isolation in ministry that Elijah experienced.

"Isolated pastors often become so enmeshed in the challenges of their congregations that they

have few interests or relationships beyond the church."[96] The value of friendship understands

that "God sculpts our souls through friends in our lives. Friends afford us the chance to hear the

voice of God's encouragement, feel the warmth of God's embrace, experience the intensity of

his listening, understand the wonder of his life"[97] through the people who loves us. Healthy

friendships "are essential to vital and creative ministry....expand our vision of the world beyond

congregational and vocational life...add richness, diversity, and contrast to our experience."[98]

Pastoral friendships have an additional benefit for the marital stress of ministry. "The

development of friends can reduce some of the pressure placed upon spousal relationships in

clergy marriages."[99] The pastor is to be in pursuit of holy friendships and relationships. "Holy

relationships liberate pastors from the enmeshment in their congregations, awaken emotional

and intellectual energies, and provide guidance and inspiration for the day-to-day and long-term

[96] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout*, 114.

[97] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 127.

[98] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout*, 114.

[99] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 127.

practice of healthy and vital ministry."[100] Reggie McNeal comments, "When I encounter spiritual

leaders who maintain friendships, I detect more joy, more balance, more vitality."[101] As McNeal

sees the importance of peer-to peer friendships and relationships, he identifies six essential

qualities for establishing friendships:

1. *Integrity.* Integrity is a character quality that permeates every area of a person's life, including the capacity for friendship.

2. *Vulnerability.* A certain amount of vulnerability must be demonstrated in order for people to connect at the heart level.

3. *Humility.* Some leaders cannot have friends because they are in competition with everyone else.

4. *Willingness to Listen.* Leaders are used to being heard. Great leaders know how to listen.

5. *Reasonable Expectations.* Many friendships fail to mature because unrealistic expectations on the part of one or both parties.

6. *Sensitivity and Responsiveness.* Being sensitive and responsive to friends' needs secures the friendship.[102]

Yahweh did not give Elijah six things to look for in a friend or fellow prophet, but he did

want Elijah to know that "the servant of God is not alone. There is the promise of God's

presence (maybe even a memorable moment on some mountaintop or in some valley),

remarkable supplies that provide for new energies and encouragement along the way, and a

recognition that others have the same calling and will share the load."[103]

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[100] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout*, 114.

[101] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 127.

[102] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 128-129

[103] Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings*, 112.

Conclusion

  Burnout is emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. The scriptures make it clear that pastors and leaders are at risk of burnout. The pastor is at risk from the burden of ministry, conflict, personal baggage, personal weaknesses, organizational structure, people, family, words, fear and sin. All of these can drain and deplete the pastor in the daily experience of ministry. Examining the life of Elijah, it has been identified that he experienced burnout from his prophetic ministry to the nation of Israel. Elijah's renewal and recomissioning to ministry came from the intervention of Yahweh into his life. The Lord provided rest and refreshment, reconnected him spiritually, realigned him to his calling and established new relationships and friendships for his ongoing ministry.

  The reoccurrence and experience of burnout and depression for those in pastoral and leadership ministry can be traced through church history. Some of the most worthy servants of God "have had their seasons of spiritual depression, when the eye of faith has seen dimly. Such was the experience of Melanchthon, Fuller, Cowper, Brainard, and scores of others."[104] Some of the more recent twenty first century pastors who have worked through burnout or depression are Bill Hybels,[105] Gary Kinnaman, [106] Wayne Cordeiro,[107] and Bill Hull.[108] The burnout experience of Elijah still sits on the horizon of the life of many pastors who need to learn how to allow for the regular intervention of Yahweh into their lives to prevent pastoral burnout. Pastors "often don't take the time for daily prayer and meditation, retreat, devotional reading,

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[104] R. Clarence Dodds, *Elisha the Man of God* (Chicago: Winona Publishing, 1904), 2.

[105] Anne Jackson, *Mad Church Disease: Overcoming the Burnout Epidemic* (Chicago: Zondervan, 2009), 43.

[106] Anne Jackson, *Mad Church Disease: Overcoming the Burnout Epidemic*, 153.

[107] Wayne Cordeiro, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion*, 2.

[108] Bill Hull, "It's Just Not Working," 2.

or other spiritual practices. Eventually, such pastors find that their ministries become stale, superficial and stressful."[109] From the life of Elijah and for the pastor today, "Any prophet who sees things going badly in his ministry and as a result wants to abandon it and or perhaps surrender his very life must assuredly have forgotten from whom his real strength comes."[110]

Every pastor can walk in the footsteps of Elijah being burned out from ministry or renewed by Yahweh. Elijah reminds us that he "was zealous for YHWH, but YHWH's purposes are not confined to Elijah's boundaries, his ways are not always confrontational. And YHWH in his grace cares for and uses an imperfect prophet – and an imperfect people who are willing to turn to him."[111]

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[109] Bruce G. Epperly and Katherine Gould Epperly, *Feed the Fire!: Avoiding Clergy Burnout*, 115.

[110] Simon DeVries, *1 Kings*, vol. 12 *of Word Biblical Commentary*, 237.

[111] John W. Olley, "YHWH and His Zealous Prophet: The Presentation of Elijah in 1 and 2 Kings," 51.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION OF THE 50,000 MILE CHECK UP THESIS-PROJECT

50,000 Mile Check Up Syllabus
A Preventative Ministry for Pastoral Burnout

50,000 Mile Check Up Description

There is high risk of burnout for those who are in the pastoral ministry of the church. Avoiding pastoral burnout involves understanding the risks of pastoral ministry, the characteristics and causes of pastoral burnout, and the means to recover and/or prevent ministry burnout from the life of Elijah.

50,000 Mile Check Up Outcomes

1. The participant will identify the positive and negative nature of pastoral ministry.
2. The participant will comprehend the nature of pastoral burnout from the life of Elijah.
3. The participant will establish new relationships by meeting and connecting with the other participants in the workshop.
4. The participant will recognize the causes of ministry burnout and exhaustion from the Scriptures.
5. The participant will identity the necessity of rest and renewal in order to restore mental, emotional, and spiritual strength for ministry.
6. The participant will examine the impact of unintentionality and intentionality of keeping spiritually connected to the Lord.
7. The participant will comprehend the importance of realigning with their calling from the life of Elijah.
8. The participant will discern how God has shaped them as a leader.
9. The participant will identify their strengths and how to be strength based leader.
10. The participant will understand the importance of building friendships and networks in ministry.
11. The participant will be able to identify the four preventative or renewing steps for pastoral burnout from the life of Elijah.
12. The participant will create a prevention plan to avoid ministry burnout.

Required Text and Assignment

- Rath, Tom and Barry Conchie. *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow.* Gallup Press, 2008.
- Complete the online *Strength Finders* assessment. Download and print the *Strengths Report* (about 5 pages) and the *Strengths Leaders Report* (about 16 pages) and bring to the 50,000 Mile Check Up.

Recommended Text

- Winseman, Albert L., Donald O. Clifton, and Curt Liesveld. *Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community.* Washington, D.C.: Gallup Press, 3rd Edition, 2008. This book is written for those in the local church with scriptures to support the strengths and local church examples.

50,000 Mile Check Up Schedule

The 50,000 Mile Check Up is designed to provide seven teaching times with the participants. It can be used as a two day event format for a 9-10 hour period or as four day event with personalized coaching for marriage and family, personal life, and ministry vision. The four day event will be described in chapter 5.

Day 1

1:00-1:30	Welcome and Introductions
1:30-2:30	Session 1: Orientation and Pastoral Burnout
2:30-3:00	Break
3:00-4:00	Session 2: Rescheduling for Rest and Renewal
4:00-5:00	Session 3: Reconnecting Spiritually with the Lord
5:00-7:00	Dinner
7:00-8:30	Session 4: Realigning with Your Calling – Self Awareness and Being Shaped by God

Day 2

8:00 -9:30	Session 5: Realigning with Your Calling – Strength Based Leadership
9:30-10:00	Break
10:00-11:00	Session 6: Reestablishing Friendships and Networks
11:00-12:00	Session 7 Game Plan & Farewell

50,000 Mile Check Up Activities

- Burnout Worksheets: The participants will complete a burnout worksheet following each teaching session during the teaching time. The teacher will need to leave time for the participants to complete the worksheets.

- Game Plan Worksheet: Each worksheet concludes with the question, *"When I dream about the ALL the possible ways I could …."* For the Preventing Burnout Ministry Worksheet, My GamePlan, the participant will review all their dream ideas from the four previous Burnout Worksheets and select 2-4 of these ideas and make them their goals for their Game Plan.

- Small Group Sharing, Breaks and Dinner: The small group sharing, breaks, and dinner are designed for the participants to build new friendships and relationships. This is an integral part of the 50,000 Mile Check Up.

Resources for Teachers

- Chapter 2 of this thesis provides the literature review that includes research and studies on burnout in general and burnout specifically for pastors.

- Chapter 3 of this thesis project provides the exegetical study of 1 Kings 19 which examines the burnout of Elijah and the intervention of Yahweh to restore and recommission Elijah.

- Chapter 5 of this thesis project provides an evaluation of the 50,000 Mile Check Up after conducting it on two occasions. A word of caution is that this retreat is built around coaching. Special attention should be paid to the importance and difference between coaching and counseling.

Session1
Welcome, Orientation and Pastoral Burnout

Session Goals
1. The participant will be given an overview of the teaching and syllabus of the 50,000 Mile Check Up.

2. The participants will be given an opportunity to meet and connect with the other participants in the workshop.
3. The participant will be introduced to the current statistics of pastoral ministry.
4. The participants will be introduced to pastoral burnout and the examination of burnout from the life of Elijah in 1 Kings 19.
5. The participants will assess their current ministry experience of pastoral burnout and share with others in a small group.

Goal 1: The participant will be given an overview of the teaching and syllabus of the 50,000 Mile Check Up.

Welcome & Course Introduction
- General welcome to all participants
- Introduce the Instructor(s) for the 50,000 Mile Check Up
- Review Course Syllabus
- 50,000 Mile Check Up Summary:
  Preventing pastoral burnout is by rescheduling for rest and renewal; reconnecting spiritually with God, realigning with your calling – self-awareness, shaping and strengths; and reengaging in friendships and ministry relationships.
- Prayer

Goal 2: The participants will meet and connect with the other participants in the workshop.

Class Introduction

Small Group Activity:
The participants will meet in small groups of four to six and share with the others:
- Their Names
- Family
- Current Ministry
- Ministry Setting
- Their reasons for attending the workshop
- Their expectations for the workshop

Goal 3: The participant will be introduced to the current statistics of pastoral ministry.

Activity: This is an Instructor led presentation examining the current statistics on the nature of ministry, pastoral burnout and the burnout of Elijah. The material for this presentation is developed and discussed in chapters 2 and 3 in this project.

Introduction
- Group discussion:
    1. If you were to share with some young men or women entering the pastorate today, what are some of the positive or good things about being in the pastorate?
    2. If you were to share with some young men or women entering the pastorate today, what are some of the negative or bad things about being in the pastorate?

The Upside Statistics for the Pastorate
- 91 % of pastors feel very satisfied about being in ministry
- 75 % say they want to stay in ministry.
- 86 % of Pastors would choose ministry for their career again
- A study on *Job Satisfaction in the United States,* "The most satisfying jobs are mostly professions, especially those involving caring for, teaching and protecting others and creative pursuits. Heading the list are members of the clergy with 87.3% satisfied."
- Tom Smith of the National Opinion Research Center "Most of the occupations ranking high in general happiness are professions involving helping others, technical and science expertise, or creativity. The occupations with the happiest people is the clergy with 67.2% very happy."
- Research shows that pastors enjoy what they are doing and want to do what they are doing.[1]

The Downside Statistics of the Pastorate
- 80 % of pastors believe that the pastoral ministry affects their families negatively.
- 30 % of pastors have considered leaving the pastorate.
- 74% of pastors say there are too many demands on their time and struggle to determine priorities[2]

Goal 4: The participants will be introduced to pastoral burnout and the examination of ministry burnout from the life of Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

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[1] Discussion of this data is found in chapter 2.

[2] Discussion of this data is found in chapter 2.

Pastoral Burnout

Group Discussion:
- We hear people talk about pastoral burnout, what is it or how would you describe it?

Statistics for Pastoral Burnout[3]
- 45.5 % of pastors say they have experienced depression or burnout to the extent that they needed to take a leave of absence from ministry.
- 45 % of pastors' wives say the greatest danger to them and their family is physical, emotional, mental and spiritual burnout.

The Definition and Description of Pastoral Burnout[4]
- Pines and Aronson state, "Burnout is formerly defined and subjectively experienced as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding."[5]
- Schaufeli, Maslach and Merek define burnout as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity."[6]
- Emotional exhaustion is "when people feel exhaustion, they feel overextended, both emotionally and physically. They feel drained, used up and unable to unwind and recover….They lack the energy to face another project or another person."[7]
- Pines and Aronson add, "Emotional exhaustion….involves primarily feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and entrapment."[8] Depersonalization is when people feel cynical. "They take a cold, distant attitude toward work and people on the job. They minimize their involvement in work and even give up their ideals."[9] And reduced accomplishment means they no longer have personal achievement. They feel ineffective. "When people feel ineffective, they feel a

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[3] Discussion of this data is found in chapter 2.

[4] Discussion of Burnout is found in chapter 2

[5] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., (New York: Free P,1988), 9.

[6] Wilmar B. Schaufeli, ed., Christina Maslach, ed. and Tadeusz Marek, ed., *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research*, (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1993), 20.

[7] Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter, The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It, (Palo Alto: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 17.

[8] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 13.

[9] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.

growing sense of inadequacy. Every new project seems overwhelming....They lose confidence in themselves, others lose confidence in them."[10]

The Ministry Burnout of Elijah – 1 King 19:1-4

Read 1 Kings 19:1-4

Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

Group Discussion:
From your recollection of the life of Elijah and this passage, do you find in Elijah emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal achievement? If so, what is your evidence from the text?

Teaching of Elijah's Burnout[11]

- Elijah's Emotional Exhaustion
- Elijah's Depersonalization
- Elijah's Reduced Personal Accomplishment

Goal 5: The participants will assess their current ministry experience of pastoral burnout and share with others in a small group.

Personal Burnout Assessment

Personal Assessment Activity
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being high, the participants will rate their burnout score of
  - emotional exhaustion 1-10

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[10] Ayala Malakh-Pines and Elliot Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, Rev Sub ed., 18.
[11] For discussion and description of Elijah's burnout see chapter 3.

- depersonalization 1-10
- reduced personal accomplishment 1-10
  - On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being high, the participants will rate their overall burnout score

Small Group Activity
The participants will meet in small groups of three to four and share with the others:
  - their personal assessment of burnout scores
  - their circumstances and causes contributing to their burnout
  - their sense of greatest risk at this time in the area of burnout
  - close their time in prayer for one another and their time together.

Session 2
Rescheduling for Rest and Renewal

Session Goals
1. The participants will examine the draining nature of ministry according to the Scriptures and its impact for potential ministry exhaustion and pastoral burnout.
2. The participant will identity Yahweh's intervention into the unintentional life of Elijah in order to provide rest and renewal to prevent pastoral burnout.
3. The participants will assess their practice of rest and renewal and dream of some ways to make this an intentional practice and share with others in a small group.

Lesson: Yahweh's Rescheduling for Rest and Renewal

Goal 1: The participants will examine the draining nature of ministry according to the Scriptures and its impact for ministry exhaustion.

Introduction

Activity: Group Discussion
Looking over your life as a pastor, what are the things that deplete you and cause ministry exhaustion? Be specific with these, for example, are there certain people or relationships that deplete you?

Activity: Teaching
- The teaching will be led by the instructor.
- The biblical development of ministry exhaustion can be developed from the instructor's personal experience or through examples and illustrations from the participants.
- Watch your time for your teaching so that enough time is left for the completion of the worksheet and discussion.

The Statistical Causes of Exhaustion in Ministry[12]
- "67% of pastors reported that their congregation experienced a conflict during the past two years; more than 20% of those were significant enough that members left the congregation."
- In the Alban Institute Survey, *Great Expectations, Sobering Realities,* they noted, "Pastors consistently reported that interpersonal conflicts – ordinary grind of disagreements over policies and goals and personalities in the churches – were among the more difficult aspects of pastoral leadership."

The Biblical Causes of Ministry Exhaustion[13]
- Daily Pressure of Church   2 Cor 11:28
- Conflict comes from Without Neh 4:7-8
- Conflict comes from Within - Acts 6:1
- The background and circumstances of the leader – Gen 41:51-52 Joseph's two sons
- The systems of ministry and the organizational structure – Exod 18
- Personal sin - Ps 32
- The different kinds of people in the church -1 Thess 5:12-14
- Family - Joseph – Parents/Siblings
- People of God - Heb 13:17
- Words - Prov 18:21
- Fear - Gideon – Judg 6

Goal 2: The participant will identity Yahweh's intervention into the unintentional life of Elijah to provide rest and renewal.

Read 1 Kings 19:5-9

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[12] Data for this ministry exhaustion is found in Chapter 2.

[13] These biblical examples are developed in chapter 3

He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat." Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake *baked on* hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Group Discussion
- In what ways does Yahweh intervene into Elijah's life? How does God provide rest and renewal for Elijah?
- What are some practices or ways that provide rest and renewal for you?

Teaching – Yahweh's Intervention of Rescheduling of Rest and Renewal

The Nature of Elijah's Ministry
- Scriptural – 1 Kings 17:1,2,5,8
- Relational – 1 Kings 17:9,15
- Functional (Calling & Gifting) - 1 Kings 18:1-2
- Conflictual – 1 Kings 18:17-18
- Miraculous – 1 Kings 18:36-39,45-46
- Exhausting – 1 Kings 19:3-4

The Intervention of Yahweh[14]
- From the life of Elijah we find that he did not make time for rest and renewal. Since he was unintentional, he was exhausted from ministry and burned out. God intervened and provided rest and renewal for him.
- Yahweh ministered through the angel and Angel of the Lord
- Yahweh renewed Elijah through the 40 days and nights journey to Mt. Horeb (Sinai). This was a journey of 10-12 days yet Elijah's journey was of a much longer journey & was provided for by the food and water of Yahweh.

The Intentional Practice of Jesus Christ of Rest and Renewal (Additional Material if time permits)[15]

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[14] Material developed in Chapter 3
[15] Material developed in Chapter 3

From the life of Jesus Christ we find that he made it an intentional practice to make time for rest and renewal.

- Mark 6:7, 30-32, 45-46
- Mark 1:35
- John 6:1, 15
- Luke 4:42
- Luke 5:16

Goal 3: The participants will assess their practice of rest and renewal and dream of some ways to make this an intentional practice and share with others in a small group

Activity

- The participants will following the instruction on the *Burnout Worksheet for Rescheduling for Rest and Renewal* and provide a personal assessment of their rest and renewal practices and dream of possible ways to change in the future.
- The participants will meet in groups of 3 or 4 and share about their personal assessment and dreams.
- The small group will pray for one another and their practice of rest and renewal.

Burnout Worksheet for Rescheduling for Rest and Renewal

1. When I look back over my life, the best and worst times or the stars and scars are
Using the time line, place your current age at the end of the time line and segment your life in equal age segments (e.g. If you are 36 place that number at the end then the segments at 20, 23, 26, 29, 32) Then on the time line place a † for your conversion an **M** when you were married and a **P** when you entered the pastorate fulltime. Place a **+** above the line for the stars or best times (the better the higher) and a — below the line for the scars or worst times (the worse lower).

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2. I would describe my current practice(s) of rest and renewal as doing
(e.g. Daily, Weekly Day Off, Sabbath, Monthly Personal Retreat Day, Vacation, Retreat(s), Conference(s), Sabbatical)

3. When I dream about ALL the possible ways I could get rest and renewal in my life, they are

Session 3
Reconnecting Spiritually with the Lord

Session Goals
1. The participant will examine the impact of unintentionality and intentionality of keeping spiritually connected to the Lord according to the Scriptures.
2. The participant will identify the intervention of Yahweh to reconnect Elijah spiritually to the Lord.
3. The participants will assess their practice of connecting spiritually with the Lord and renewal and dream of some ways to make this an intentional practice and share with others in a small group.

Goal 1: The participant will examine the impact of unintentionality and intentionality of keeping spiritually connected to the Lord according to the Scriptures.

Introduction

Group Discussion:

1. On a sheet of paper, list all the ways a follower of Jesus Christ can connect spiritually with the Lord.
2. On the same sheet of paper, answer the following question,
    a. "What percent of pastors do not have a disciplined or scheduled time for study?"
    b. What percent of pastors do not have a disciplined scheduled times of prayer?
3. On the same sheet of paper, what are the reasons that it is difficult for pastors to stay spiritually connected with the Lord?
4. Group interaction: Ask the same questions for the group interaction. Write the answers on a *Post-it® Self-Stick Easel Wall Pads, 20" x 23* hang the answers on the wall.

Goal 2: The participant will identify the intervention of Yahweh to reconnect Elijah spiritually to the Lord

Teaching

This section will be an instructor led teaching time. This is a shorter teaching time, but the instructor is to make time for the participants to conduct a self-assessment and have time for small group interaction.

Statistics on Protestant Pastors Disciplines of Study and Prayer[16]
In the Alban study concerning the sobering realities of the protestant pastorate, they discovered,

- 62% are not 'involved in disciplined study of sermon texts'
- 62 percent do not 'have disciplined or scheduled times for study,'
- 51 percent do not have 'disciplined scheduled times for prayer.'

Read 1 Kings 19:9-14

Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to

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[16] Data and material found in Chapter 2.

take it away." So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing. When Elijah heard *it*, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice *came* to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Then he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

The Intervention of Yahweh to Reconnect Elijah Spiritually[17]
    When YHWH intervened into Elijah's life, He does it
- Personally – 1 Kings 19:11a
- Individually – 1 Kings 19:11a
- Privately – 1 Kings 19:11b
- Quietly – 1 Kings 19:12
- Directly – 1 Kings 19:13-18

The Outcome of Yahweh reconnecting Elijah spiritually
- Keeping spiritually connected aligns you with your calling, purpose, mission and passion.
- When Jesus connected spiritually with the Father, He reconnected with His calling, purpose and mission.
- Compare Mark 1:29-39, when the crowds responded to Jesus' ministry, he connected spiritually with His Father (v.35) and determined to "go somewhere else to the towns nearby, in order to preach there also, *for that is what I came for.* (Italics mine.)"

Goal 3: The participants will assess their practice of connecting spiritually with the Lord and renewal and dream of some ways to make this an intentional practice and share with others in a small group.

Activity
    Personal Reflection
    The participants will reflect on the following questions to assess how and when they connect spiritually with the Lord.

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[17] Material developed in Chapter 3.

Questions to Think About

- Do I find myself exhausted from ministry?
- Do I schedule time for rest on a weekly basis?
- Do I follow through and actually rest on a weekly basis?
- Do I plan for renewal from my exhaustion of ministry?
- Am I spiritually connected to Christ?
- How do I realign myself to my calling, purpose, mission and passion?
- When do I realign myself to my calling, purpose, mission and passion?
- What changes do I need to make in my life and ministry to find rest for my soul and to keep spiritually connected?

Stop the Personal Reflection after 5-10 Minutes.

- Tell the participants to stand up.
- Tell them to find two other participants who they have not prayed with before in a small group.
- Tell the participants to introduce themselves, family, ministry, ministry setting.
- Without sharing prayer requests, have participants pray for one another and their reconnecting spiritually with the Lord.
- Tell the participants to return to their previous seats.

Activity

- The participants will follow the instruction on the *Burnout Worksheet for Reconnecting Spiritually with the Lord* and provide a personal assessment of this rest and renewal practices and dream of possible ways to change in the future.
- The participants will meet in groups of 3 or 4 and share about their personal assessment and dreams.
- The small group will pray for one another and their practice of rest and renewal.

Burnout Worksheet for Reconnecting Spiritually

1. When I look back over my life, the best and worst times or the stars and scars are Using the time line, place your current age at the end of the time line and segment your life in equal age segments (e.g. If you are 36 place that number at the end then the segments at 20, 23, 26, 29, 32) Then on the time line place a † for your conversion an **M** when you were married and a **P** when you entered the pastorate fulltime. Place a + above the line for the stars or best times (the better the higher) and a — below the line for the scars or worst times (the worse lower).

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2. I would describe my current practice(s) for keeping spiritually connected with the Lord Jesus Christ by….. (e.g. Devotions, Quiet Time, Prayer, Worship, Fasting, Silence, Solitude, Others)

3. When I dream about ALL the possible ways I could be keeping spiritually connected with the Lord Jesus Christ, they are

Session 4
Realigning with Your Calling
Self Awareness and God's Shaping

Session Goals
1. The participants will understand Yahweh's intervention into the life of Elijah to realign him with his calling.
2. The participant will examine Yahweh's intervention into the life of Elijah to identify what self-awareness he wanted Elijah to gain.
3. The participant will examine the eight ways God shapes a leader.
4. The participant will assess the God shaping circumstances, events, influences in his life and share with others in a small group.

Goal 1: The participants will understand Yahweh's intervention into the life of Elijah to realign him with his calling.

Introduction

Group Discussion
After studying the life of Elijah through his burnout, rest and renewal and being spiritually connected, what do you think Yahweh wanted Elijah to learn about himself?

Some answers for Elijah's Self-Awareness are that he wrestled with his
- Independence
- Pride
- Fears
- Depression/Discouragement/burnout
- Calling
- Gifting
- Responsibilities

Goal 2: The participant will examine Yahweh's intervention into the life of Elijah to identify what self-awareness he wanted Elijah to gain.

Teaching
This is an instructor led time of teaching. For the section of God's Shaping of the Leaders, the instructor should review the references, examples and scriptures to be familiar with the idea and content. The instructor may also have better biblical illustrations that he will want to substitute. This section can be illustrated with personal illustrations that complement the biblical examples.

Read 1 Kings 19:15-17

The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death.

The Intervention of Yahweh to Realign Elijah with His Calling[18]

R. D. Patterson expands on the three tasks of Elijah. He states that the task was threefold:

> (1) in the realm of international politics, he was to anoint
> Hazael to succeed Ben-Hadad, Israel's perennial adversary in Damascus;
> (2) in national affairs, Jehu was to be anointed as the next king (v.16); and
> (3) in the spiritual realm, Elisha was to be commissioned as his successor.[19]

Goal 3: The participant will examine the eight ways God shapes a leader.

The God's Eight Ways of Shaping of a Leader
1. Calling - Isaiah, Isa1; Jeremiah, Jer 1; Paul, Acts 9; Jonah , Jonah 1; Moses, Exod 3-4

2. Family Relationships - Timothy 5:1-2

3. Uprooting and Moving - Abraham, Joseph, David, Elijah Daniel, Ezekiel, Jesus, Timothy

4. Baggage & Strongholds - "such were some of you" 1 Cor. 6:9-11
   - Fear – Gideon
   - Manipulation/Deception – Jacob
   - Immorality/Abuse – Rahab
   - Timid/ Shy – Timothy
   - Depressed/Discouraged – Elijah
   - Dysfunctional Family – Joseph
   - Legalism/Perfectionism - Paul
   - Paganism – Abraham & Ruth
   - Racism - Cornelius
   - Physical Limitations – David
   - Materialism/Greed – Zacchaeus
   - Murderer – Saul
   - Impulsive – Peter
   - Self -Willed – Moses

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[18] Material found in Chapter 3.

[19] R.D. Patterson, 1,2 Kings, vol. 4 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 151.

- Eloquent/Wordy – Apollos
- Heritage – John the Baptist
- Arrogance/Pride – Nebuchadnezzar
- Ambition – John
- Inferiority – Joshua
- Inexperienced – Jeremiah
- Addictions – Noah

5. Giftedness, Ministry and Effectiveness - 1 Cor. 12: 4-6

6. Temptations & Weaknesses - 1 John 2:15-16; 1 Cor. 10:13; Jas 1:13-15; 2 Cor.12:9-10

7. Sufferings & Trials - I Pet 2: 20-21; 4:12-13; Jas 1:2-4; Phil 3:10

8. Examples and Models - John. 13:15; 2 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12

Goal 4: The participant will assess the God shaping circumstances, events, influences in his life and share with others in a small group.

Activity
1. The participants will follow the instruction on the *Burnout Worksheet for Realigning with My Calling* and **only answer questions 1-3 (questions 4-6 will be answered following the next session)** and provide a personal assessment of how God has shaped you as a leader.
2. The participants will meet in groups of 3 or 4 and share about their personal assessment of how God has shaped them as a leader and their baggage.
3. The small group will pray for one another and the baggage they bring into their ministry.

Burnout Worksheet for Realigning with My Calling

1. When I look back over my life, the best and worst times or the stars and scars are Using the time line, place your current age at the end of the time line and segment your life in equal age segments (e.g. If you are 36 place that number at the end then the segments at 20, 23, 26, 29, 32) Then on the time line place a † for your conversion an **M** when you were married and a **P** when you entered the pastorate fulltime. Place a **+** above the line for the stars or best times (the better the higher) and a **—** below the line for the scars or worst times (the worse lower).

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2. When you look at the baggage of the various biblical examples, what is your baggage that you carry into ministry?

3. When I examine the God's Eight Ways of Shaping a Leader, the top three ways God has shaped me are:

4. According to Strength Finders, my domains of strength are

    1.

    2.

    3.

My 5 strengths with a brief description are

    1.

    2.

    3.

    4.

    5.

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5. I would describe my current realigning with my calling as
    (e.g. Calling, Passion, Purpose, Gifting, Shaping, Strengths, Ministry, Others)

6. When I dream about ALL the possible ways I could be realigning with my calling, they
    are

Session 5
Realigning with Your Calling
Strength Based Leadership

Session Goals

1. The participant will understand the commitments of most effective leaders.
2. The participant will identify the nature of strength based leadership.
3. The participant will identify their leadership strength and how it works in ministry.
4. The participant will understand the needs of a follower.
5. The participant will identify their strength domain, their five strengths and assess the
    God shaping circumstances, events, influences in his life and share with others in a small
    group.

Teaching
The instructor will be using the material from the required textbook and assessment *Strength
Based Leadership.* The instructor should have taken the strength finders assessment and bring
his copy of his 5 Strengths Report and his Strengths Leaders Report. All participants should have

the copies of their Strengths Report and their Strengths Leaders Report with them for this session. The session is an overview of the material in the book and then a discussion and interaction with participants about their strength domain and strengths. The purpose of this session is to provide self-awareness for the participants.

Goal 1: The participant will understand the commitments of most effective leaders.

Gallup Poll Key Findings from 10,000 Followers
- Although individuals need not be well rounded, teams should be.
- The most effective leaders are always investing in strengths.
- The most effective leaders surround themselves with the right people, then maximize their team.
- The most effective leaders understand their followers' needs.[20]

Goal 2: The participant will identify the nature of strength based leadership.

Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, in *Strength Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow*, make the following statements concerning the nature of strength based leadership.

- "If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you will never be great at anything."[21]
- "Leaders are blind to the obvious when it comes to something of critical importance to them – their personality."[22]
- "At the very basic level, it is hard for us to build self-confidence when we are focused on our weaknesses instead of our strengths."[23]
- "In most cases, leadership teams are the product of circumstance more than design…..Rarely are people recruited to an executive team because of their strengths are the best complement to those existing team members."[24]

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[20] Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow* (New York, NY: Gallup Press, 2009), 23.

[21] Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*, 7

[22] Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*, 11.

[23] Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*, 14.

[24] Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*, 21.

Goal 3: The participant will identify their leadership strength and how it works in ministry.

Teaching

In their work on strength based leadership, Rath and Conchie identify four domains of leadership strength. They are described in the following way:

- **Executing** – when you need someone to implement a solution, work tirelessly to get things done
- **Influencing** – always selling the team's ideas inside and outside the organization
- **Relationship Building** – essential glue that holds the team together, the unique ability to create groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum parts
- **Strategic Thinking** – keep us focused on what *could be,* continually stretch our thinking for the future

Within the four domains of leadership, Rath and Conchie identity 34 specific strengths. Completing their strength based assessment, the assessed individual receives a report identifying their 5 strengths with descriptions and a report on how these strengths work with other people. The 34 strengths are listed in the following chart.

Table 4:1 Strength Based Leadership Domains and Strengths

Executing	Influencing	Relationship Building	Strategic Thinking
Achiever	Activator	Adaptability	Analytical
Arranger	Command	Developer	Context
Belief	Communication	Connectedness	Futuristic
Consistency	Competition	Empathy	Ideation
Deliberative	Maximizer	Harmony	Input
Discipline	Self-Assurance	Includer	Intellection
Focus	Significance	Individualization	Learner
Responsibility	Woo	Positivity	Strategic
Restorative		Relator	

Source: Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow* (New York, NY: Gallup Press, 2009), 103-235.

Activity Group Discussion
The instructor will lead an interactive discussion with all participants about their domain of strength and their strengths. Take note that the 5 strengths are listed in the order of strength. In other words, the strength listed as number one is their greatest strength.

Goal 4: The participant will understand the needs of a follower.

Teaching
In order to be an effective leader, one needs to know the needs of the follower. Rath and Conchie following a survey of 10,000 people, identify the following as "Followers' Four Basic Needs."

1. Trust – honesty, integrity, respect
2. Compassion – caring, friendship, happiness, love
3. Stability –security, strength, support, peace
4. Hope – direction, faith, guidance[25]

Goal 5: The participant will identify their strength domain, their five strengths and assess the God shaping circumstances, events, influences in his life and share with others in a small group.

Activity
- The participants will follow the instruction and complete the *Burnout Worksheet for Realigning with My Calling* from the previous session and **answer questions 4-6.**
- The participants will meet in groups of 3 or 4 and share their dream of possible ways to realign with their calling in the future.
- The small group will pray for one another and being a "strength based leader."

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[25] Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*, 82-91.

Session 6
Reengaging Ministry Friendships and Relational Networks

Session Goals
1. The participant will understand the importance of building friendships and networks in ministry.
2. The participant will identify God's priority and importance of ministry friendships from the life of Elijah.
3. The participant will observe the intentionality in building relational friendships in ministry throughout scripture and ministering in teams.
4. The participants will assess their practice of reestablishing ministry friendships, dream of some ways to make this an intentional practice and share with others in a small group.

Goal 1: The participant will understand the importance of building friendships and networks in ministry.

Teaching – Yahweh's Intervention for Reengaging Friendships for Elijah 1 Kings 19:18-21

- From the life of Elijah, we find that he operated as a lone ranger.
- He did not have friends or colleagues in ministry that he worked with or confided in.
- Are pastors today "lone rangers" and lacking friendships?

Statistics of Pastoral Isolation and Friendships[26]

The following statistics reflect a similar pattern in pastors and pastor's wives ministering in America.

- 68 percent of the pastors indicated that they felt isolated and lonely.
- 70 percent of pastors do not have someone they consider a close friend.
- 56 percent of pastor's wives say that they have no close friends. Pastors' and Wives' @ Risk
- Pastors are at greater risk of depression, discouragement and burnout when they lack the social networking and support of others.

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[26] Data and material found in Chapter 2

- The lack of social support may come from the denominational leader overseeing the pastor....
  - from the pastor's peers, fellow pastors within his denomination, ministry association or his own church community.....
  - may be greatest for those pastors serving outside denominations or church associations who have no regular opportunity to get together with other pastors.
- And finally, the lack of support may be for those pastors who do not have a fellow pastor or friend who they may discuss their concerns about ministry, marriage or family.

In a study "how do pastors cope with the stress of the ministry?[27]

- 69% of their coping was through intrapersonal methods (time off, prayer, exercise, meditation/solitude, healthy eating, scripture, personal hobbies, maintaining priorities, trusting God, having joy, personal retreats, study and ministry activities.)
- 12% were coping within the marriage
- 19% were external coping in the area of community (outside of the family)

Quotes on Pastoral Friendships

Pastors are not likely to turn to networking with other pastors or looking to any support ministry for help. This again makes them susceptible to burnout. "One of the most robust findings of our first four studies is that the clergy do most of their care alone."[28]

But even if pastors want to develop personal relationships that encourage them and allow them to talk openly about their ministry or marriage, "a 'lone ranger' mentality, for example, undermines the kind of networks of support and community that sustains people over time."[29]

David Wood, writes, "Friendship sustains pastors over time and not simply during crises – it is the kind of collegiality that is crucial to the cultivation of self-knowledge, relational intelligence, the capacity to remain dynamically engaged with one's work and the ability to identify and negotiate conflict, all of which are relevant to the dynamics that cause pastors to leave pastoral ministry."[30]

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[27] Material in Chapter 2.

[28] McMinn Mark et al., "Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses," *Pastoral Psychology* 53, no. 6 (July 2005), 576.

[29] L. Gregory Jones, "Needy Pastors," *Christian* Century, (June 15-22, 1994), 62.

[30] David J. Wood, "Why Pastors Leave Exit Interview," *Christian* Centruy, (December 13, 2005), 33.

Goal 2: The participant will identify God's priority and importance of ministry friendships that God provided in the life of Elijah.

Read 1 Kings 19:18-21

> Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him." So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

Teaching Yahweh's Intervention in Reengaging Ministry Friendships for Elijah[31]

When we consider Elijah's relational networking, we discover that it is YHWH who directed him to build a friendship with Elisha. It was YHWH that made it a priority. From this intentional activity of YHWH we can identify the following components of friendship

- YHWH Desired Friendship
- Priority Friendship
- Intentional Friendship
- Personal Friendship
- Collegial Friendship
- Sacrificial Friendship
- Assisting/Ministering Friendship

Goal 3: The participant will observe the intentionality in building relational friendships in ministry throughout scripture and ministering in teams.

Friendships and Teams in the Bible

Old Testament Friendships and Teams
- Moses and Joshua

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[31] Material found in Chapter 3

- Jonathan and David
- Isaiah and Hezekiah
- Jeremiah and Josiah
- Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

New Testament Friendships and Teams
- Paul and Barnabas
- Paul and Silas, Timothy, Titus, and Luke
- Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos
- Jesus and Peter, James and John
- Jesus and Lazarus, Mary and Martha
- Jesus and the twelve disciples.

Teams of Two
- Jesus practiced the priority of friendship and ministry relationships when he sent the disciples out in pairs (Mark 6:7).
- And the early church followed this pattern of Jesus when the leaders in Antioch sent out their first missionaries; they sent them out in pairs, Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2-3).

Jesus's Words concerning His Disciples
- Jesus described his relationship with his disciples in John 15: 14 he says, "You are My friends..."
- And it should be noted that John identified His relationship with Jesus Christ as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (John 21:20)

Goal 4: The participants will assess their practice of reengaging ministry friendships, dream of some ways to make this an intentional practice and share with others in a small group.

Activity
- The participants will follow the instruction on the *Burnout Worksheet for Reestablishing Friendships and Relational Networks* personal assessment of his friendships and relational networks and dream of possible ways to change in the future.
- The participants will meet in groups of 3 or 4 and share about their personal assessment and dreams.
- The small group will pray for one another and their reengaging in friendships and relational networks.

Burnout Worksheet for Reengaging in Friendships and Relational Networks

1. When I look back over my life, the best and worst times or the stars and scars are Using the time line, place your current age at the end of the time line and segment your life in equal age segments (e.g. If you are 36 place that number at the end then the segments at 20, 23, 26, 29, 32) Then on the time line place a † for your conversion an **M** when you were married and a **P** when you entered the pastorate fulltime. Place a **+** above the line for the stars or best times (the better the higher) and a — below the line for the scars or worst times (the worse lower).

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2. I would describe my current friendships and relational networks as (e.g. Marriage, Family, Friends, Accountability, Counseling, Others)

3. When I dream about ALL the possible reengagements/new friendships and relational networks, they are

Session 7
My Pastoral Preventative Burnout Game Plan

Session Goals
1. The participant will create a preventative plan to avoid ministry burnout.
2. The participants will share their Game Plan with others in the group.
3. The participant will collect the information from several other participants to establish some new ministry friendships.
4. The participants will commit their Game Plan to prayer with the other participants.

Teaching
The instructor is a facilitator of this session. He must watch the clock so that the following is achieved during the closing hour.

Activities

Goal 1: The participant will create a preventative plan to avoid ministry burnout.

    The participants will be dismissed to move around the room or building to complete the *Game Plan for Preventing Pastoral Burnout*. Give the participants 20-25 minutes.

Goal 2: The participants will share their Game Plan with others in the group.

    The participants will meet in their small group of 3 or 4 and share some of their Game Plan. Give the participants 15 minutes.

Goal 3: The participant will collect the information from several other participants to establish some new ministry friendships.

    In their small groups, they will exchange cell phone numbers, email and address information with one another to make future contact and to pray for one another. Give the participants 5 minutes.

Goal 4: The participants will commit their Game Plan to prayer with the other participants.

    In the large group, the instructor will facilitate the closing of the 50,000 Mile Check Up allowing all to lead out in prayer of commitments to fulfill their Game Plan in preventing pastoral burnout for each other. Give the participants 10 minutes or until the agreed upon closing time, e.g. 12:00 P.M.

Closing and Farewells

Game Plan for Preventing Pastoral Burnout
After prayerfully reviewing all of my dreams for preventing pastoral burnout my goals are:

Rescheduling for Rest and Renewal	Start Date	Comments
Reconnecting Spiritually with the Lord Jesus Christ	**Start Date**	**Comments**
Realigning with My Calling	**Start Date**	**Comments**
Reengaging in Friendships and Relational Networks	**Start Date**	**Comments**

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF 50,000 MILE CHECK UP THESIS-PROJECT

Description of the 50,000 Mile Check Up Retreat

The 50,000 Mile Check Up was conducted as a four day retreat event in Streamwood, Illinois. It was conducted the first time, July 13-16, 2009 and the second time July 18-21, 2011. The Check Up is built around three components, community, coaching and teaching. The community component brought three ministry couples, who were missionaries with Rural Home Missionary Association (RHMA), four ministry coaches and one facilitating couple together for a four day event. Housing was provided on site for all involved and most meals and breaks were shared together. Both 50,000 Mile Check Ups were hosted at the Awana Clubs International headquarters in the northwest suburb of Chicago of Streamwood, Illinois.

Along with the teaching of Chapter 4, the retreat format provided fourteen hours of personalized coaching for each married ministry couple. The coaches were faculty and adjunct faculty of Moody Bible Institute. A coaching couple was responsible for the area of marriage and family, another coach for personal life and vision and another coach for ministry vision. The couple would meet with each coach(es) for a two hours exploring the teaching concept and its impact on that area of the life of the couple. Prior to attending the retreat, each couple completed the following assessments and questionnaires: Prepare and Enrich, Leadership DiSC, Strength Finders, Personal and Ministry Questionnaire and Ministry and Vision Assessment.

The teaching time was built around the life of Elijah, a man of full time ministry, who was exhausted, depressed or burned out and one who was refreshed, renewed and restored to ministry. The exposition of his life provides the key components for continual renewal for

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ministry and the means for restoration for ministry. One of the pastors said of the 50,000 Mile

Check Up, "I'm dreaming again (at least more than I was before) --- I'm working through my

game plan on a course that will lead to a better me in the days, months, and years ahead --- I

feel reconnected with my spouse over many things of life and ministry."

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Retreat

The overall response was that the retreat was an outstanding event with an overall

approval of a 4.66 out of a 5.0 scale by the couples and coaches. It was effective for the couples

to reflect on their marriage, family, life and ministry and to create a Game Plan with goals in

these three areas. Several items contributed to the strengths of the retreat.

There was no cost to the couples attending the retreat because a grant was secured

through RHMA that covered all the expenses of the the retreat. For the couples, this covered

their travel expenses, food and lodging. This grant also covered the the expenses of the

coaches, their food, lodging and honorarium.

Another strength was that the retreat provided an atmosphere and schedule that

contributed to the community of the couples and coaches. The retreat was hosted through the

hospitality, generosity, lodging and facilties of Awana. This facility provided an atmosphere for

meals, breaks and casual conversation that contributed to the community aspect of the retreat.

The schedule provided the sharing around catered meals and breaks that encouraged the

couples and coaches to interact and share with one another outside of the times of teaching and

coaching.

And the major strength of the the retreat was the coaching team that brought the

competency, skills and commitment of each coach to work with the ministry couples. Their

passion and interest was a vital part to working alongside the ministry couples. One of the

participants wrote of the coaches that "they were all very real, down-to-earth, personable,

godly people. They were easy to talk to and were good listeners. Though they had a ton of

wisdom to offer but they never came across as know-it-alls or that they themselves had it all

figured out. They truly were people who manifested grace and truth."

The couples acknowledged that the four day event though exhausting, allowed them to

focus on specific areas of marriage, life and ministry with the input of other godly leaders

speaking into their lives and helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses. A pastor

after the retreat in his evaluation wrote, I'm "beginning to learn how God has made me and to

embrace that and not see it as a liability but an asset." Another pastor who participated in the

retreat made these statements concerning the retreat and the ministry of the coaches,

> The 50K really helped me begin to understand how God has uniquely made me and how
> that relates to every area of my life. It also gave me an opportunity to see that I have been
> neglecting some very important things in my life and helped me see how I can 'get back to
> the basics.'....It seemed that all of our sessions (personal, family and ministry) seamlessly
> flowed together. It was good to have (sic) the wisdom and perspective of seasoned men
> and women who could listen to us and help us process our thoughts. It was also a good and
> balanced atmosphere (there were both laughter and tears).

That all the sessions "seamlessly flowed together" identifies how the teaching of the life of Elijah

in preventing pastoral burnout was enhanced and developed through the wisdom and

interaction of the coaches to draw out from the couples specific applications and goals.

Conducting the retreat on two occasions, there were weaknesses identified in the first

retreat with changes made in the second retreat. The greatest concern expressed by the

coaches in our first retreat was the lack of accountability when the couples completed their

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Game Plan goals and returned to their homes and ministries. The couples identified goals in the

areas of marriage and family, personal life and vision and ministry vision; however, there was no

structure in place to follow up with the couples. For the second retreat, the instructor for the

retreat scheduled a monthly coaching appointment with each couple for the next twelve

months. This gave accountablility and encouragement to complete the Game Plan goals. One

couple's comment on the evaluation about this change wrote,

> The problem with any conference, regardless of how wonderful and beneficial it was, is
> that once one gets home all the learning and revelation gets tossed aside. The brilliance
> of the call once a month keeps every thing on the front burners and causes one to
> continue to work on and think about all the things that were learned. I find that one
> thing extremely refreshing and think it's absolutely brilliant!

A second weakness idenitfied was that the retreat started without a conversation with

each couple to determine if there had been any major changes in their life or ministry since they

had completed the assessements. For our second retreat, each couple met with the four

coaches to chat, share, get to know each other and pray together before the welcome and

orientation to the retreat.This provided a connection between coaches and couples so that the

coaches could hear some of their greatest concerns that each couple had about their marriage,

life and ministry and their hopes from the 50,000 Mile Check Up.

A third weakness identified was that the retreat ended with no corporate conclusion.

We had dinner together and then left. For the second retreat, we hosted a time of worship,

sharing and prayer with the coaches and couples. This provided a sense of closure and farewell

for the couples and coaches.

A final weakness, and probably the greatest weakness, was that the coaches did more

counseling than coaching for the couples. This proved to be a task that could not be completed

in the short time of the retreat and a task that drained both the couples and the coaches. The outcome of this was a lack of creative energy to reflect, dream and make goals for the Game Plan. The counseling was prompted by several of the needs identified in the assessments taken by the couples. The reorientation of the retreat to a coaching ministry and not a counseling ministry was addressed in two ways. First, the role of a coach was differentiated from that of a counselor. Gary Collins in the third edition of his book, *Christian Counseling* provides the following comparison and contrast between counseling and coaching.

Table 5:1. Comparison and Contrast of Counseling and Coaching

Counseling	Coaching
Deal with pain problems and symptoms	Guides to attain specific goals
Focus on the past	Emphasize present and future
About healing and recovery	About growth and moving forward
Assumes something wrong and needs to be made better	Assumes new visions need to be clarified and empowering people
About pathology	About possibilities
Seeks to help people overcome weaknesses	Focus on developing strengths and build on these
Looks at feelings and focuses on what the person experiences inside	Focus on results and strategies to reach them
Usually done face-to-face	Done over the telephone

Source: Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: a Comprehensive Guide,* 3rd ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 57.

The role of the coach was also clarified for the coaches. In their time coaching the couples they were to:

1. help identify relevant issues
2. build self-awareness of strengths, spiritual gifts, abilities, interests

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3. help formulate vision
4. develop strategy for reaching goals
5. stimulate action and hold accountable
6. Identify and deal with obstacles[1]

The counseling issue was addressed in a second way. Each couple was asked to bring the name and contact information of a Christian counselor to the retreat. During each couple's final coaching appointment with all the coaches, if a couple identified as one of their goals the need for counseling, the name of their pre-selected counselor was added to their Game Plan. The monthly coaching appointment provided the accountability to follow up with the couple to make sure that they pursued the counseling that was needed.

Recommendations

The final lesson that Yahweh taught Elijah was the importance of reengaging in friendships and relational networks. For the facilitator and instructor of the workshop or retreat, it is important to communicate regularly and clearly with those who will be attending. There is a great sense of uncertainty and a "step of faith' to come to an event that addresses ministry burnout. The individual or couple needs as much information as possible for them to be prepared for this time of reflection, teaching and planning.

It is important to not underestimate the importance of the community component of the workshop/retreat. It is intentional for the participants to meet in small groups during the workshop/event. This is to cultivate this final lesson of Yahweh to Elijah to reengage in

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[1] Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: a Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed., (Nashville, Tenn., Thomas Nelson, 2007), 58.

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friendships. Built into the workshop/retreat schedule is an opportunity for these new friendships to take some root before they leave. This means that if there is a time crunch, it is better to abbreviate the teaching time and provide adequate amount of time for the interaction and cross pollination of the participants in small groups, breaks and meals together.

Finally, the time for personal reflection and answering of the questions on the *"Burnout Worksheets"* is a necessary component for the interaction in the small groups and to build toward the final goals of the Game Plan. The instructor must make the time for the participants to complete these assignments. It is remembering that the learner-focused instructor will provide the participant the time for reflecting, thinking, writing and talking with other participants because this is invaluable teaching time for the student.

APPENDIX 1

REVISED SCHEDULE FOR 50,000 MILE CHECK UP

Revised schedule for the four day retreat of the 50,000 Mile Check Up that was conducted July 18-21, 2011.

Table 1. Revised Schedule for 50,000 Mile Check Up

50,000 Mile Checkup Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday	Friday
	Welcome	Visioning What Was and What Is			Re-Visioning What Could Be			Game Plan What Will Be	
		Couple A	Couple B	Couple C	Couple A	Couple B	Couple C		
7:30		Breakfast						Breakfast	
8:00		Worship and Ministry, Rest and Renewal			Breakfast			Worship and Building Relational Networking	
8:30									Departure of Couples
9:00		Family	Ministry	Personal	Worship – Aligning with Your Calling – Self Awareness, Shaping and Strengths			Couple A	
9:30									
10:00									
10:30		Break			Break			Break	
11:00									
11:30		Personal	Family	Ministry	Family	Ministry	Personal	Couple B	
12:00									
12:30									
1:00	Coaches Meeting	Lunch			Lunch			Lunch	
1:30									
2:00	Couple A								
2:30		Ministry	Personal	Family	Personal	Family	Ministry	Couple C	
3:00	Couple B								
3:30									
4:00	Couple C				Break			Coaches Meet	
4:30									
5:00		Dinner on Own Coaches Dinner & Meeting			Ministry	Personal	Family		
5:30									
6:00									
6:30	Welcome Dinner Orientation							Dinner Prayer Farewell	
7:00		Keeping Spiritually Connected			Dinner on Own Coaches Dinner & Meeting				
7:30									
8:00									
8:30									
9:00									

50,000 MILE CHECK UP EVALUATION FORM FOR COUPLES

50.000 MILE CHECK UP EVALUATION FORM FOR COUPLES

July 2011

What a great privilege to serve alongside you in this pilot program for RHMA. This evaluation will help me in two ways. First, it will help us improve this ministry for future couples who serve with RHMA helping them in the areas of marriage and family, personal vision and ministry vision. Second, it will help me in my DMin program at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. This program was approved as part of my thesis project. So I am looking for your candid thoughts and comments to help us help other pastoral couples more effectively. I would ask you to write as many comments as you would like on this form or the back or even additional sheets. And after you get home, if you have some additional thoughts and comments please forward them to me, too.

Thanks so much for your help.

<div align="right">

Serving Christ Together
Mike Boyle
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MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

Circle only **one number** on the scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. **Circle** only **one number** on the scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

1. **Overall communication to you as a Couple in preparation for the event was complete and useful.**

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

2. **The Schedule provided the time necessary to accomplish the ministry objectives.**

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

3. **The Awana facilities were good for housing and having meals.**

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

4. **The Awana facilities were good for your coaching appointments.**

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

5. **The meals and snacks were healthy and adequate and met your expectations.**

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

6. **The notebook was helpful.**
   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

Circle only **one number** on the scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. **Circle** only **one number** on the scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

7. **The coaches came with good and appropriate expectations for their time with you.**
   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

8. **The coaches did the expected preparation for your coaching component.**
   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

9. **There was good and positive interaction with the coaches.**
   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

10. **The time with coaches helped to move toward a GamePlan.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

11. **There was a sense that the Spirit of God was at work during time with the coaches.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

12. **There was a sense of camaraderie with the other couples and coaches.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

13. **The coaches were responsive and understanding to your ministry setting.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

14. **The coaches were encouraging to your ongoing ministry in a rural America.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

15. **The coaches demonstrated knowledge and skill in their areas of expertise.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

16. **The coaches were helpful in providing good feedback and evaluation.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

17. **The coaching appointments met your expectations.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

18. **The coaches spoke with grace and truth.**
    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

19. The assessment tools were helpful for your coaching appointments.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

20. The GamePlan provided a positive outcome for you as a couple.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

21. The coaching times were worth your time and investment.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

MINISTRY REFLECTION

22. What are the benefits of the 50,000 Mile Check Up for you?

23. What were the strengths of the coaching team?

24. What were the weaknesses of the coaching team?

25. What are your thoughts and impressions of the assessment tools used by the coaches?

26. What words of encouragement would you give to the coaches?

27. What suggestions would you offer the coaches?

28. Which component of the coaching was the most valuable to you? Why?

29. Which component was the least valuable to you? Why?

30. What were the strengths of the 50,000 Mile Check Up?

31. What were the weaknesses of the 50,000 Mile Check Up?

32. Did the 50,000 Mile Check Up meet your expectations? Why or why not?

33. If done again, what would you sustain in the 50,000 Mile Check Up?

34. If done again, what would you stop in the 50,000 Mile Check Up?

35. If done again, what would you start or add in the 50,000 Mile Check Up?

36. What is your overall assessment of the 50,000 Mile Check Up?

37. How would you describe this event to a ministry couple who is looking at attending it?

38. As a result of the 50,000 Mile Check Up the greatest benefit to me was..........

39. Other comments, thoughts or suggestions

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